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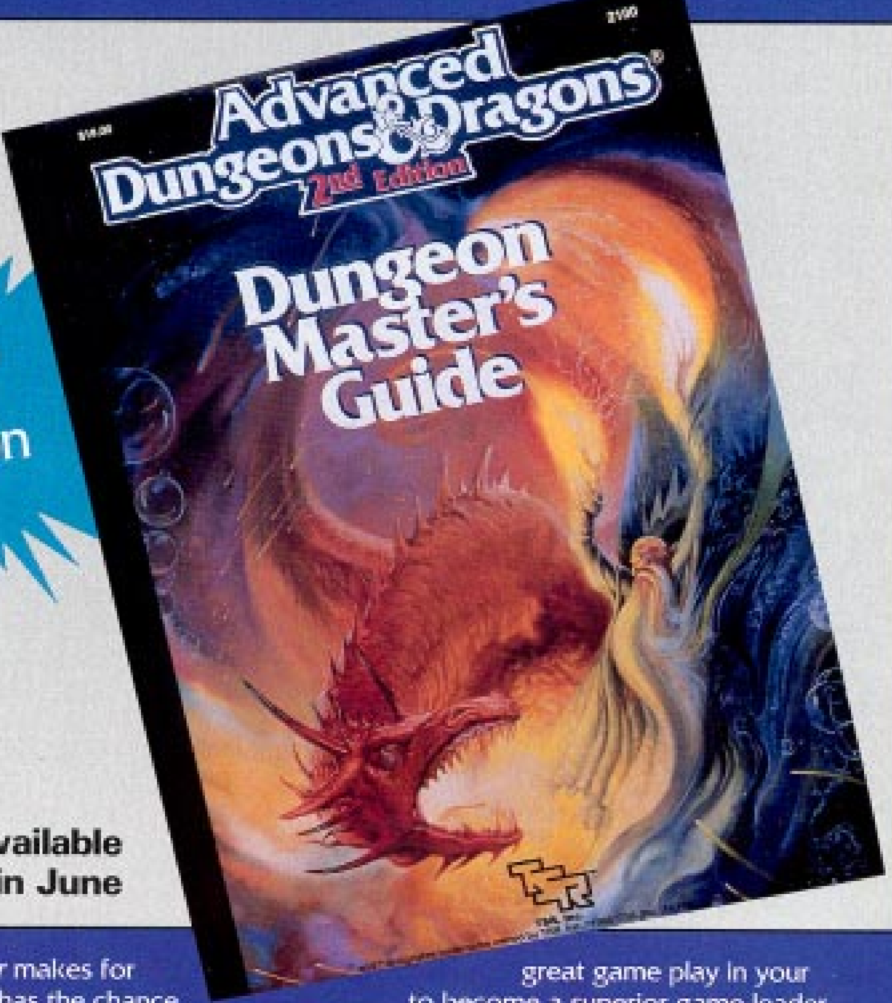

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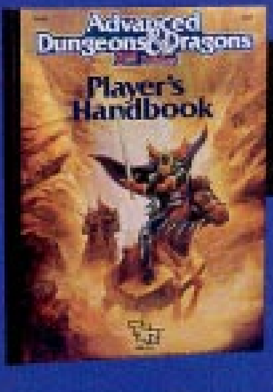

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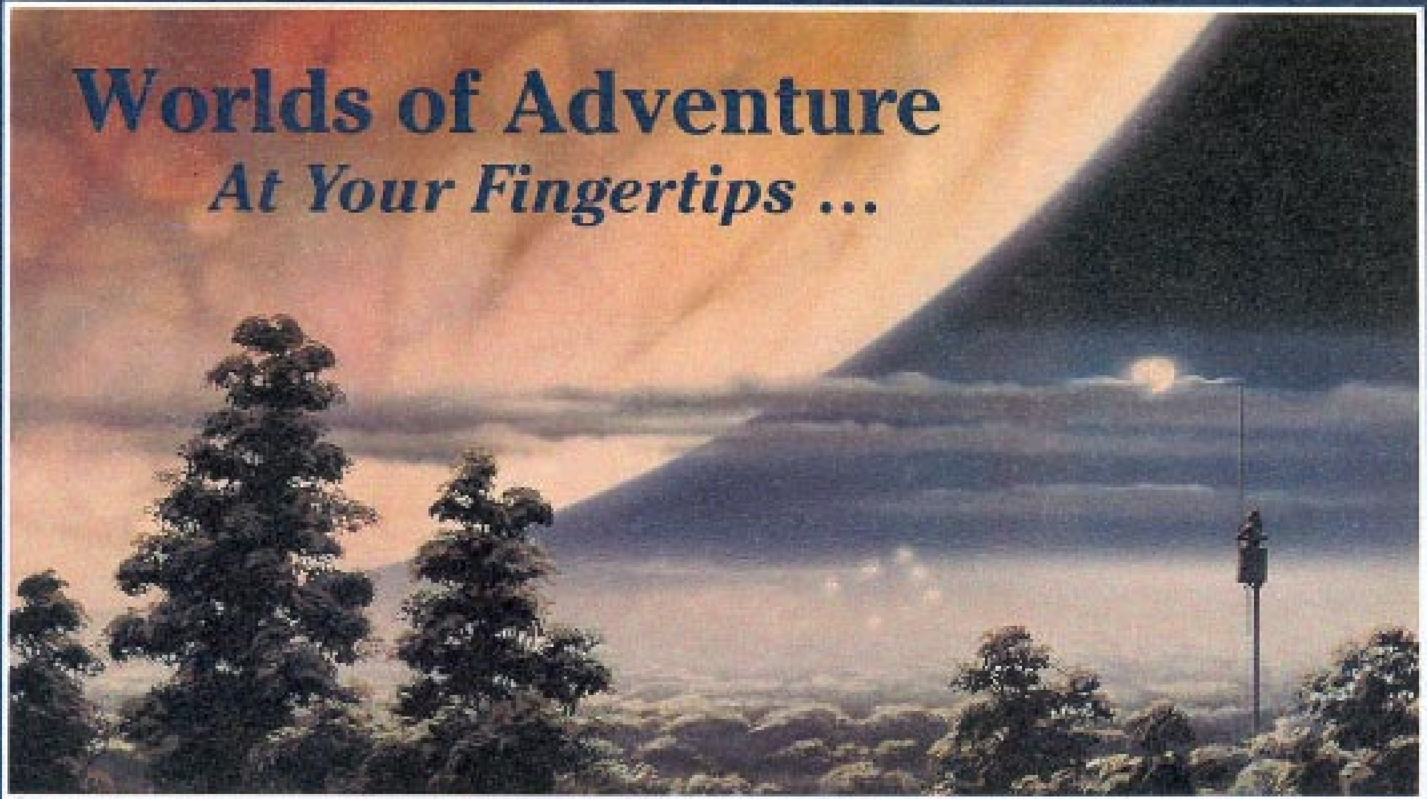

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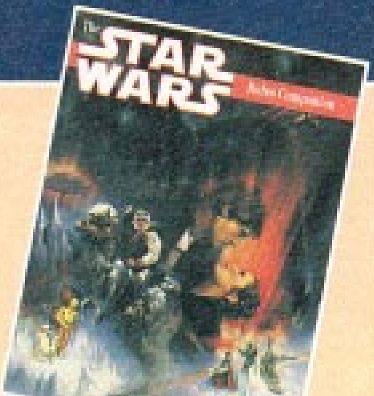

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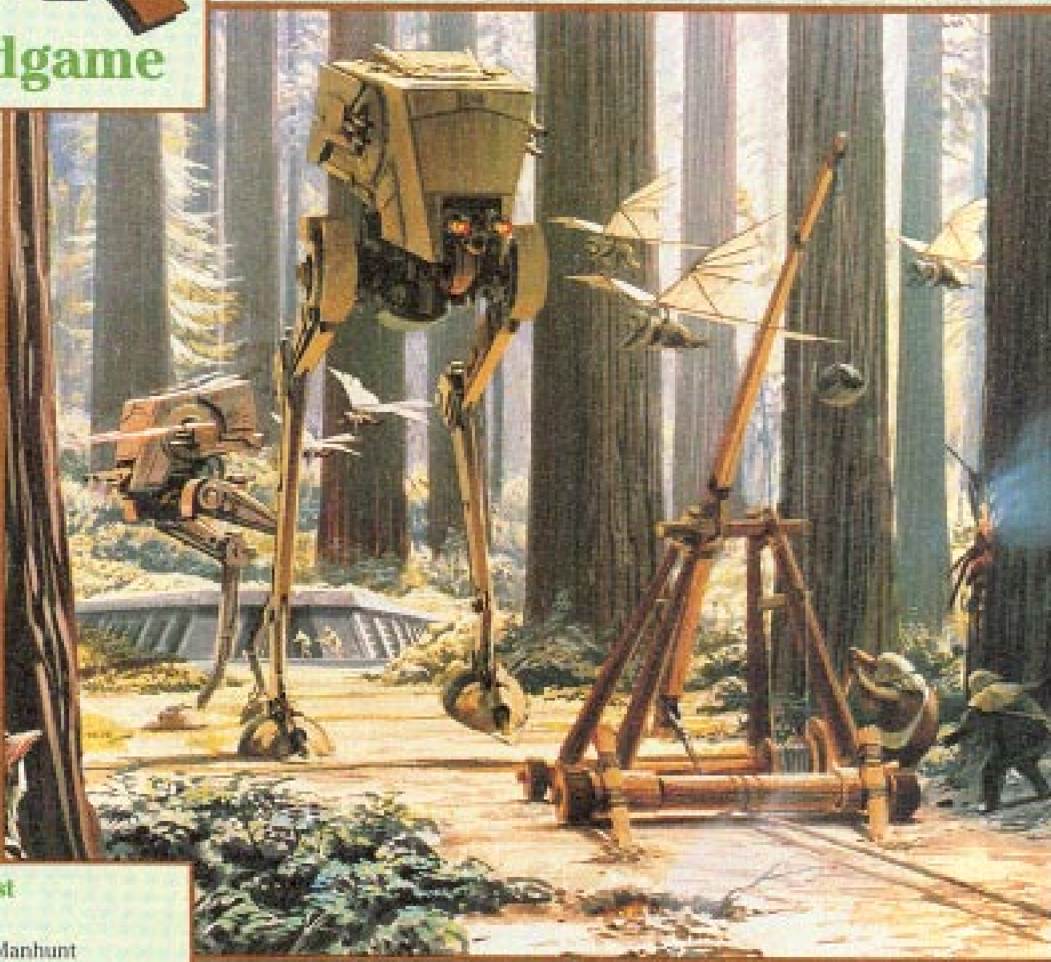

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COVER

"I did it fast," was Clyde Caldwell's first comment on his cover painting for this issue. "I got tired of doing evil sorceresses, so I decided to do a good one," he said, adding that he calls this painting "White Magic." Clyde is a veteran cover artist for DRAGON® Magazine, his first cover gracing issue #53.

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you’d like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Heyer & higher!

Dear Lori,

Guess what! I just received notification that I won the Magazine Merit Award [for illustrations for] 1988, from the Society of Children’s Book Writers, for the DRAGON cover, “Frog Prince.”

I am really excited; this is a prestigious award, and I feel we both share in it.

Carol Heyer
Thousand Oaks CA

The staff of DRAGON Magazine extends its congratulations and appreciation to Carol Heyer for her award-winning artwork (and to Lori Svikel for picking it out as our cover for issue #138). The Magazine Merit Awards are given in recognition of outstanding original magazine work for young people. We always believed our contributors were the best.

Druids & poisons

Dear Dragon:

I am writing in regards to my article, “The New, Improved Druid,” published in issue #139. There are several points I would like to clarify and explain.

Under “Poisons,” it is stated: “A successful save vs. X or XX poison causes the victim to take damage equal to half his original (fully healed and restored) hit points.” This is incorrect and should apply to XX poison only. A successful save vs. X, Xa, or Xb poison reduces by half the damage taken per round *[round fractions up]* until the victim is dead.

Under “Antidotes,” it states: “The victim [in the example] is given a Type A antidote the next round and ends up taking 5 hp actual poison damage (10 hp were neutralized). Two rounds later, the same victim is struck again for 25 hp damage but ends up taking only 15 hp as the antidote is still active.” This is also incorrect, as it was previously stated that a Type A antidote negates 6 hp of poison damage, not 10. The victim in the above case would take 9 hp of poison damage on the initial strike, and two rounds later would take 19 hp instead of 15 hp. This damage is all added to weapons damage.

The poison brewing ability gained by instruction at 3rd level is not taught by all druidic sects, and it is left to the DM to allow it in his game. Remember, druids do not look upon using poison as an evil art. They, see it as an efficient and natural way of disposing of enemies.

I would also like to clarify the *shape changing* ability of the Great Druid. The Archdruids and the Great Druid may each use their five animal forms twice each per day, but the Great Druid gains one extra animal form that may be used one time per day. It was my intention that this ability be equal to the ninth-level magic-user spell *shape change* but limited to the single form chosen with each use of this ability. This *shape changing* has a duration equal to 1 turn per level of the druid.

Richard Hernandez
Kalamazoo MI

Dear Dragon:

In “The New, Improved Druid,” the article states that the druid has the power to *shape change* at will, but then it says that a druid who reaches 14th level uses the ability but once per day. Can you clarify this?

Chris Hubbell
St. Louis MO

The use of’ this ability “at will” means simply that the druid may shape change *simply by willing the change to occur; the druid does not have to cast a spell to cause it to happen. The druid is still bound by the restrictions on* shape changing *mentioned in the article and in Richard's letter above.*

Imaginate that!

Dear Dragon:

I am writing in response to the editorial column you published in issue #140 ("A failure to imaginate”). I quite agree with you that articles that differ from the “normal” medieval setting should also be published in DRAGON® Magazine because readers do like them. My personal feeling is that for every reader who objects to an article, there are at least two who must have loved it but did not bother to write to you about it.

For example: Other readers’ complaints aside, I loved the special section on druids in issue #119. The articles improved the druid character I was running so much that the former DM of that group is now *himself* playing a druid in our new campaign. And about the claims that druids do not fit into a medieval world: What about Merlin, who is the best-known wizard in all medieval literature? *He* was a druid!

Another example concerns the disputed article on new undead, back in issue #138. You should have seen the look on my players’ faces when the “dry bones” skeletons kept reassembling themselves! The players were sure that some hidden, evil spell-caster was continuously casting *animate dead* just to annoy them! They were furious, especially when they figured out that the cleric must be of at least 11th level in order to cast this spell four times a day.

Thanks again for a wonderful magazine, and for all those helpful and enjoyable articles.

Amit Izhar
Kiron, Israel

Hill giants with lasers

Once in a while, I had a taste for doing something really offbeat in the role-playing games I used to run. The more bizarre the idea, the better the group seemed to like it–well, most of the time (the fighter who fell into Winnie the Pooh’s “heffalump” trap had a few choice things to say about it). It seemed like a criminal waste to have people come over to my place and be bored, so I did my best to keep the players entertained.

The most offbeat scenarios I ever ran were those produced by crossing two different gaming genres. The basic idea is to take a module or setting from one game system and adapt it for use with another game. The results can be terrific. Early issues of DRAGON® Magazine and ***The Strategic Review*** described games in which SS troopers met an evil high priest and his allies, and in which a group of fantasy characters wandered through the starship ***Warden*** in TSR’s old METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA game. Marcus Rowland’s superb article, “The Mix-&-Match Module” (from DRAGON® issue #135), gives details on how to set up and run cross-genre scenarios. The notes on “The Ongoing Campaign” in the AD&D® 1st Edition ***Dungeon Masters Guide*** are also helpful.

The following are some cross-genre scenario ideas I invented for the games I ran (some were even used). It is hoped that another DM will borrow them or develop some equally bizarre adventures with which to horrify gamers.

“Land of the Giants: The RPG” (for GDW’s TRAVELLER® or MEGATRAVELLER® game): Get out an old copy of the AD&D® module G1 ***Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*** (recently rereleased as part of GDQ 1-7 ***Queen of the Spiders).*** Make up the statistics for a new hominid species, ***Titanthropus sapiens,*** an Ancient-manipulated, 10'-tall human race that lives in barbarism on a Red Zone planet on the Imperium’s fringe. Rework the Steading so that magical items become technological items (the Titans have been raiding poorly armed scientific expeditions), and make up values for different items such as pelts, furs, gold coins,

Continued on page 98

FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Ltd.™, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

Michael Norrish (issue #140) suggests that clerics be limited to those spells that are more characteristic of their deities (e.g., the cleric of a warlike god or goddess could only pray for combat-related spells). Andrew C. Gronosky (issue #140) suggests building the campaign around a pantheon of gods, since both NPC and PC actions are proportionately related to the will or whim of said deities.

Norrish is cutting off potential for development or survival to spite rules I don't agree with. Saying "I'm limiting the spells you can get because I don't think your god likes them" is not the bottom line. The bottom line is merely "I'm limiting the spells you can get." Clerics have relatively poor spells because they can wear armor and are almost as good in combat as fighters.

The only big advantage clerics have is that they have access to any spell at the level at which they can cast; if a PC cleric needs an obscure clerical spell, he usually gets it. Yes, in extreme cases of alignment or purpose, a spell might be denied to the cleric, but Norrish is suggesting that this last-ditch resort be applied casually–just like a sentence of death by slow torture should be issued for a parking ticket.

Gods, presumably, are wiser and more diverse than mere mortals, and mere mortals aren't fools enough to limit their henchmen and hirelings to being pale imitations of themselves. Unity is not the same as uniformity, and all but the most childish gods know this. A cleric of Thor who spends more time tending wounds than inflicting wounds might have trouble advancing within the hierarchy of the church and might be reviewed by the god or his servants more often and more thoroughly than the run-of-the-mill cleric would. However, he wouldn't be denied requested spells without good reason (if for no other reason than the fact that it's bad publicity for the god).

Gods don't give power to clerics if they don't feel the clerics are worthy. A PC cleric will be answerable for his spell choice, if not directly to his god then by taking experience-point penalties or increased training costs in order to advance in level. Even in those rare instances where the cleric is permitted use of weapons normally prohibited to the class, the cutoff of spells is a poor trade for such a gain.

Gronosky doesn't specifically put any limits on PCs or classes, but he suggests that such an increase in emphasis on the gods of a campaign will cause the wants and needs of the players to get lost in the rush. If gods exist in the real world, it may well be that the wants and needs of the people will be pushed aside. But this is a game world, and ultimately the game world revolves around the PCs.

I'm not suggesting that a PC be allowed to succeed with every attempt. I am suggesting DMs remember that without PCs, there is no game, and even the gods' place in the scheme of things is to help or obstruct the PCs in their missions. I don't object to making those gods more credible in the game, as long as that credibility and the effort to achieve it don't bog the game down.

On a related note, if you are designing a pantheon for a campaign, try to cover all the alignments with a choice of several gods. There is a rule in the 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* and the *Legends & Lore* books that requires clerics to be the same alignment as their deities, and I've seen a few pantheons that have lacked certain alignments. If you have a chaotic-good cleric in a DRAGONLANCE® campaign, your character is technically illegal, and all experience points earned as a cleric are forfeited. Hickman & Weis could have avoided this by stating the *Lords & Legends* rule wasn't applicable in the DRAGONLANCE® world or by providing a chaotic-good deity or two in the background. They failed to do so, and unless your DM has the habit of being charitable, it's your hard luck.

S. D. Anderson
Whittier CA

The gods of mythology are an entertaining addition to many AD&D® game campaigns, and "Keepers of the Faith" (issue #140) described their mortal servants richly and well. But it is possible to have developed realistic ministries without ever defining "different gods." Several "Forum" writers have already pointed out that religion is intensely personal, even in a game. It is a sensitive issue whether gamers are traditional monotheists (like this writer), secularists, or members of the great world faiths that revere Vishnu, Kuan-Yin, and others. Thoughtful DMs have always left the ultimate mysteries of faith to each player's understanding. C. S. Lewis's Narnia, J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth, and The Land of Stephen Donaldson are all overflowing with religious feeling, yet we seldom see their characters worshiping or arguing about theology. What metaphysical creeds unite and divide people in the D&D® game worlds? How do D&D® game clerics actually lead worship? How are faithful clerics given spells, and erring or hypocritical clerics punished? Who knows? Who really cares? The truth is that no adult likes to be told what god to worship, or how or why.

And for mature players, the aspirations and faiths of living people are far more interesting than the caprices of ultrapowerful phantoms. Perhaps the most exciting thing about the whole DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game phenomenon is the way it has renewed young people's interest in different cultures and systems of belief that

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exist in our own world. Popular accessories like Chaosium's *The Gods of Glorantha* use imaginary gods to display different outlooks on life. GAMMA WORLD® campaigns center on Cryptic Alliances, and even Steve Jackson Games' TOON® game characters have their special beliefs. Frankly, a cleric is most interesting when he embodies a philosophy of life or a special mission.

You need only look at our own world to discover ministries for professional clergy. Every community will have good clerics caring for the poor, the disabled, the orphans. An army needs chaplains, a port has a chapel to aid sailors, and other ministries can support scholarship, commerce, art, music, philosophy, or military excellence. Clerics will be active in all kinds of politics, and good, brave ministers will serve the oppressed. Sadly, there will be evil clergy who support people's greed, hatred, and prejudices. Even different alignments of the same sect may stress very different things. Varying lawful-good clerics may emphasize struggling for social justice, practicing nonviolence, doing philanthropic work, raising a happy and virtuous family, maintaining a minority identity, or forcing virtue on one's neighbors. Some clergy expect a good living, while others live on alms.

As always, once you have found ministries for your clerics, you will enjoy individualizing each group in AD&D® game terms. Your major NPC clerics will be as useful as ever, and the different perspectives of your clerics will give you many ideas for interesting adventures. A new PC cleric might even define his own purposes and code of behavior, without any talk of serving a make-believe god.

Many DRAGON Magazine readers will disagree very strongly with the idea of using our own beliefs and goals, rather than those of the gods, to define our clerics. I am not suggesting for a minute that every campaign need to scrap its make-believe pantheon; the gods can still visit worlds where clerics are defined by their beliefs and missions. Unique beings that inspire love or loathing might guide and help particular sects, whether or not they are objects of special devotion. Every kind of ministry may have a place on the vast outer planes to which gate spells lead.

But ultimately the creatures of ***Legends & Lore*** are most interesting because they embody the best and worst in us. For C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, the gods of fantasy are good and bad angels. For Michael Moorcock, they merely proclaim the ambiguities of our own tragic world. But for most fantasy writers—from Homer to Fritz Leiber to the writers of TSR® modules T1-4, Q1, A3, GW7, and OP1–the great powers of the Outer Planes are grand comic creations, figures of fun made in man's image. As such, they have brought us much enjoyment through literature, art, and most recently, adventure gaming.

Ed Friedlander
Kansas City KS

Mr. Gregory Detwiler's fine article "Fantasy Clerics and Clerical Fallacies" (issue #140) identifies how limited the usefulness of a village priest (typically a 3rd-level cleric) would be to a group of village peasants in need of healing. Even the cure ***light wounds*** spells would be too strong for most needs and too limited in number; magic devices such as wands and staves would also be too strong and too valuable to use on a peasant population. However, Mr. Detwiler overlooks what was and still is regularly available to myself and other High Church (Catholic, Orthodox, and some Episcopal) priests as a normal supernatural healing agent: holy oils.

There are three types of these oils, consecrated each year during Holy Week by the bishop in his cathedral and distributed to all parishes and monasteries. The Oil of Catechumen is used on newly born or newly converted individuals to allow the sacraments to be received. In game terms, this would be considered a necessary prerequisite for receiving any good magic: *heal, bless, strength, or shield* spells. The other important oil is Sacred Chrism, which is used by the bishop to consecrate people and things. In game terms, neither a cleric nor a paladin would be able to cast any spells or turn undead without having been so anointed. But the oil most germane to this discussion is the Oil of the Sick. The priest anoints all those in danger of death as rapidly as he can, but only once per occasion. In game terms, if anyone was down to only 1 hp, the cleric could anoint him, restoring 1-4 hp and curing the disease(s)–if the Good Lord so chooses. In the game there would be a 50% chance for such healing for each person (possibly modified by the holiness of his behavior)–but the priest could anoint hundreds each day. (I have done so.)

Fr. Patrick J. Dolan
Killeen TX

In issue #140, Gregory Detwiler goes to great lengths to say that the average peasant in the AD&D® game world is no better off than his counterpart in this world. This is because peasants have little use for the spells used by clerics, and those spells that can be used are too few to help a large number of people. While it is true that even powerful clerics do not have enough spells to treat everyone in an epidemic or a disaster, they do have more than enough power at lower levels to lessen the effects of such horrors as plague, famine, spoiled food, and disasters.

All of this assumes that each village would have at least one cleric of 3rd level: a priest. This does not seem as outrageous as Mr. Detwiler holds, since the churches of the world can only benefit from having followers in villages. In fact, such parishes may be more loyal than city dwellers who have several different temples available to them. In return for one or two sons being sent into church service as clerics, artisans, or soldiers, the church sends a priest to look out for the town and to ensure a steady influx of worshipers, income, and followers. At 3rd level, the village priest would have access to all spells through second level, which—while not earth shaking–can go a long way toward making life better for the peasant.

The major element in reducing the peasant population in any primitive culture is disease, usually brought on by malnutrition. Although a priest could not create food to feed a village in times of trouble, regular use of *purify food & drink* spells could do a lot to cut down on the growth of parasites in the water supply and food reserves. Should trouble strike, a ***create water*** spell could be used to generate a limited supply of pure water for the children in the village, who have less resistance to such parasites. This would cut down on the infant mortality rate, meaning a greater number of children would live to become adult peasants who would then have children of their own.

The adventurers' favorite spell, *cure light wounds*, also has far more use than allowed for by Mr. Detwiler. Accidents among peasants were, and in some places still are, far more common than the one incident where the peasant "accidentally belts a fellow reaper with his scythe." Accidents in construction or in the handling of temperamental horses can cause terrible amounts of damage to a person; just look at the damage capability of a horse in the ***Monster Manual*** for example. Even if not fatal, such injuries could cripple a man, reducing his ability to work and cutting down the food supply for his family. Similarly, the use of such a spell on farm animals can save valuable livestock from a plethora of injuries. ***Cure light wounds*** cast on a woman who has just completed childbirth would, in almost all cases, save the woman from death, internal injuries, infection from dirty surroundings, or ham-handed doctors. This is certainly important since, until the second half of this century, more women died in childbirth than in any other way.

Although spells like ***aid*** and ***slow poison*** are also rejected by Mr. Detwiler because they are only short-term solutions, they can be of great help to the peasant who needs emergency treatment. It only takes seconds to cast a spell (less time than it takes to apply a tourniquet), and this may give the cleric the time needed to get proper medical aid or concoct an antidote. Admittedly, at low levels the time is very limited, but in an emergency, every second counts.

Spells such as *speak with animals* and *augury* can be used for watching for trouble before it hits the congregation, giving villagers a chance to prepare for the unpleasantness of a marauding band of orcs or an early winter. A *ceremony* spell such as *burial* can ensure that undead creatures do not generate from the village's recent dead.

While these are only examples of what can be done with low-level spells, they can give players an idea on how to run local clerics in rural villages. While such men and women may not be able to prevent epidemics, drought, and famine, they can certainly reduce the damage of such events and reduce the wear and tear on the villagers caused by everyday events, making the villagers more able to resist the real disasters when they occur. Such clerical aid also makes the average man better disposed toward the clergy, ensuring the church's support in a region and strengthening the church that the cleric serves, making it stronger and therefore better able to serve its followers.

Paul Astle
Larchmont NY

In all of my four years of gaming, I have met only one gamer who really stands out: Pastor Mark. Mark is 31, and he says he's been playing the AD&D® game since he was in high school. He, being a pastor, tries his best to keep religious references out of the AD&D® game. Though he often plays a paladin or a cleric, he does not think that people should play Heaven or Hell as actual places. In that event, he renamed them in our campaign.

The Seven Heavens, being the source of lawful-good and the power of paladins, have been renamed as Utopia. I think it sounds rather fitting, for utopia is said to be a place of perfect happiness and harmony.

The Nine Hells is referred to as the Nine Pits. Because of the descending structure of the Hells, as described in the ***Manual of the Planes,*** the Pits is an accurate description. This leads to phrases such as "this is the pits!" and so forth.

I feel that Marks renaming policy is effective in widening the gap between fantasy and reality. It should diminish some religious orders' belief that the AD&D® game is mocking God. Even though there is no grounds for this belief, such a change in names should cut down on the accusations.

Dan Fehler
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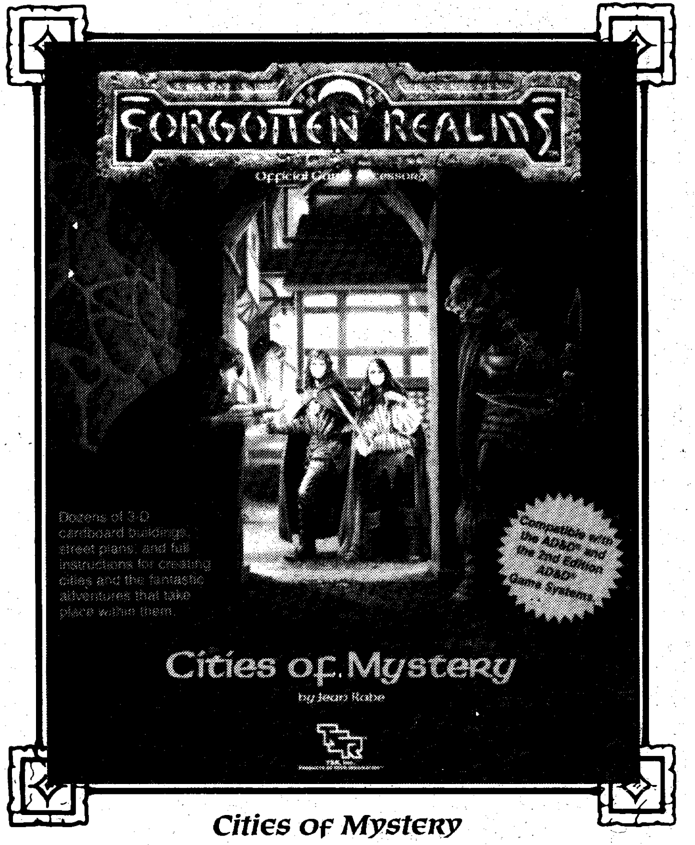
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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

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The sage continues his examination of the magical items of the AD&D® game universe, continuing from issue #146. All information in this article concerns the AD&D® 1st Edition game, and references to the ***Dungeon Masters Guide*** and ***Players Handbook*** are to the 1st Edition game versions of those volumes. In all cases, the information in the AD&D® 2nd Edition game volumes takes precedence where there is a contradiction between those rules and the information in this article.

Potions

Will a potion of *undead control,* work on undead who are under an evil cleric's control? Could an evil cleric control undead under that potion's influence? If both effects are operating in the same area, which one takes precedence?

Both effects work normally but not simultaneously, even on undead controlled by other means. The first form of control to be applied to a particular undead monster works normally until its duration expires or until control is usurped by another form. A cleric can make multiple attempts to establish or reestablish control (see the ***DMG,*** pages 65-66), while the potion-user can try only once per potion used (see the ***DMG,*** page 127).

If a character mixes two potions and rolls a 00 on the *DMG's* potion miscibility table (page 119), can he duplicate the resulting potion if he knows the exact formulas of the two original potions?

No. Potions are manufactured through the art of alchemy, not the science of chemistry. When two completed potions are combined, there is no way to predict the result; if the two original potions are duplicated and mixed again, a second miscibility roll must be made.

Rings

If a *ring of regeneration* (from the *DMG,* page 130) can revive someone who has died from hit-point loss due to injuries, can it revive someone slain by a *death spell, power word kill,* or banshee wail?

No, in all three cases. The ***death spell*** causes irrevocable death (see the ***Players Handbook,*** page 83), which means that it takes a ***wish*** to get the slain creature back to life. The banshee's wail ***(see*** the ***Monster Manual,*** page 50, "Groaning Spirit") and the ***power word kill*** spell ***(Players Handbook,*** page 93) are even more potent forms of death magic. Exactly what can be done to bring back victims of these effects is up to the DM, but things such as *regeneration,* ***death's door,*** and healing spells are not enough to do it.

Can a *ring of regeneration* revive a character if the ring is placed on the victim's finger after he has died?

No. A ***ring of regeneration*** is not a portable ***resurrection*** spell. The ring is powerful enough to keep a creature's soul or spirit from departing if the ring is worn by the victim at the time of his death, but the ring can't bring the victim to life if the soul or spirit has already departed.

How long does it take for a *ring of regeneration* to regrow lost limbs? Can damage from fire or acid be *regenerated?* What about damage from *disintegration?*

Here are some unofficial organ-regrowth times for a ***ring of regeneration:***

Finger, toe, nose, or ear: 1 hour (6 turns);
Hand, foot, or internal organ: 6 hours (36 turns);
Arm, leg, or wing: 1 day (24 hours); and
Head: 1 week (7 days).

Replacement time is only two rounds if the lost organ is present and can be pressed into place. Trolls and vampires ***regenerate*** 30 times faster than a character with a ***ring of regeneration.*** Severed pieces of a troll are ambulatory and will crawl to the troll and press themselves on. Pieces lost from vampires merely re-form, as if becoming solid from vapor.

Fire and acid do not prevent ***regeneration,*** but these effects do prevent a slain creature from coming back to life by using ***regeneration.*** If a ***regenerating*** creature survives a fire or acid attack, it will eventually ***regenerate*** the damage. However, if the creature is slain by such an attack, or if it is slain and its remains are destroyed by fire, acid, or ***disintegration,*** it remains dead. If a creature falls victim to a ***disintegrate*** spell or its effects, it vanishes completely and cannot be ***regenerated.*** (If it was using a ***ring of regeneration,*** the ring is ***disintegrated*** as well, if it fails its saving throw against the spell.)

If a character wearing a *ring of protection* steps into the area protected by a second *ring of protection* with a radius of effect, are the two rings temporarily cumulative?

No. In general, when protections of the same type are combined, only the strongest or best one functions. The ***DMG*** states that this is the case when two ***rings of protection*** are functioning on the same person or in the same area (see page 130).

A *ring of earth elemental command* acts as a *ring of feather falling* until activated, whereupon it grants the ability to cast *feather fall.* Does the ring still act as a *ring of feather falling?*

The "at will" abilities gained when the ring is fully activated will replace the ring's original function. This holds true for all ***rings of elemental command.*** In most instances, however, the "at will" spell ability is just as effective as that of the original ring (see the ***DMG,*** pages 129-130).

Will a *ring of fire resistance* protect the wearer's equipment or just his body?

This is up to the DM. Generally, it is safe to assume that the ring keeps the wearer's personal equipment from burning to cinders if he walks through a normal fire. However, the ring's + 4 saving throw bonus vs. magical fires applies only to the wearer, and does not extend to his items (see the ***DMG,*** page 130).

Rods, staves, & wands

How is a wand, staff, or rod recharged?

The spell-caster first casts an *enchant an item* spell (or its equivalent, if he isn't a magic-user), then recharges the item by placing additional spells into it. You may give a bonus to the item's saving throw ***(see*** the ***enchant an item*** spells description in the ***Players Handbook,*** pages 83-84), since wands, staves, and rods are already enchanted to hold multiple spells.

The exact spell that is needed to recharge the item will vary with the type of item. A ***wand of fireballs,*** for example, requires ***fireball*** spells. A ***wand of fire,*** however, can create multiple effects; in such cases, the spell required for recharging is that which is the highest-level spell effect that the item creates (a ***wall of fire*** spell, in the ***wand of fire's*** case). Some items create effects that are unique; for these, you will have to decide on a spell or combination of spells that approximates the item's effect. For example, ***shatter*** or ***spiritual hammer*** might be used to recharge a ***staff of striking,*** as these effects all involve magical force.

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proached this problem by creating new spells to fit some of these magical items. The spells have been published in the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, the bimonthly newsletter of the RPGA™ Network, which is available only to members (see POLYHEDRON™ issues #22, 24-26, and 31).

How is a *rod of cancellation* made?
That device is created using ***enchant an item*** and probably ***anti-magic shell*** spells, as well as whatever other time and material requirements and success rates the DM wishes to impose. As this item is quite valuable (see the ***DMG,*** pages 122 and 133), its construction should be difficult and expensive.

Are rods permanent items, or do they have charges?
Most rods have 40 + 1dl0 charges when found (see the ***DMG,*** page 132). Certain rods (like a ***rod of cancellation)*** have one charge only.

What kind of weapon is a *rod of smiting* considered for weapon proficiency purposes?
Treat that rod as a staff.

Do nondruids have to have a proficiency in the staff sling in order to use the missile ability of a *staff of slinging?*
This item's description (in *Unearthed Arcana,* page 95) clearly states that only druids may use that staffs slinging ability. For all others, the staff is merely a ***staff* *+ 1.*** You could decide to require druids to have a proficiency in the staff sling in order to use the slinging ability without penalty.

Does a magic-user suffer a -5 nonproficiency penalty when using. the first function of a *wand of force?*
No. The shaft of force created by the first function is the equivalent of a magical broad sword, but (like a ***Mordenkainen's sword*** spell) it is not a true sword and does not require any specific proficiency in order to be used properly (see ***Unearthed Arcana,*** page 96).

A *wand of conjuration* can create a wall of total darkness that "can be penetrated only by physical means or magic." What other ways are there?
You've missed the point. The key word here is "penetrate." A creature cannot see beyond the wall unless he sticks his head through the wall, steps through it, or uses a magical effect such as ***clairvoyance*** or *wizard eye* to penetrate it. Magical effects that involve direct visual detection within the area of darkness, such as ***detect invisibility*** or ***continual light,*** cannot penetrate the wall (see the ***DMG,*** page 135).

What is the range of a *wand of flame extinguishing?*
The wand has a range of 12" ; it can extinguish only one fire at a time (see ***Unearthed Arcana,*** page 96).

Miscellaneous items

What is the duration of a manual or tome?
Manuals and all other magical books in the game are much like scrolls in effect. Their potential magical powers have no duration, but once the books are read, the writing in them disappears. Their effects are permanent, although the onset of beneficial effects might take some time (see the individual descriptions of such books in the ***DMG).***

I understand that strength bonuses from *gauntlets of ogre power* and the various *girdles of giant strength* are cumulative under certain conditions. What are these conditions?
These items are cumulative only when the wearer is wielding a magical war hammer, either held or hurled. (See the ***DMG,*** page 145, ***girdle of giant strength;*** the reference to "hurled weapon" in the text for the ***gauntlets of ogre power*** on the same page should be taken to mean a magical war hammer. See also pages 168 169, ***hammer +3, dwarven thrower*** and ***hammer of thunderbolts.)*** The gauntlets' and girdle's powers may not be combined for any other purpose.

If a character wearing *gauntlets of ogre power* or a *girdle of giant strength* is struck by a shadow or other attack that drains strength, what happens?
Temporary strength losses are taken from the character's augmented strength score, and results are taken accordingly. Such losses are always a full point, so that a hit from a shadow will reduce a character wearing ***gauntlets of ogre power*** to a 17 strength. Permanent strength losses, such as those due to aging, are taken from the character's base strength score. In these cases, the magically augmented score is unchanged.

In the DMG, page 123, the sale price of a *girdle of giant strength* is listed as 2,500 gp. Isn't this a bit low? Gauntlets of ogre power, which bestow less strength, sell for 10,000 gp.
This was a misprint. The sale price for such a girdle is 25,000 gp. The experience value was also misprinted; it should be 2,000 xp, not 200 xp. Note that a girdle imbues the wearer's entire body with extra strength, while the gauntlets enhance only the wearer's chest and arms.

Can magical gloves and gauntlets be worn simultaneously?
No. One will not fit over the other.

Will *gauntlets of ogre power* or a *girdle of giant strength* allow a demi-human fighter an increased level-advancement limit?
Strength bestowed by magical items such as girdles or gauntlets is temporary; it lasts only as long as a character wears such an item. Thus, these items do not allow extra advancement in level. Only a permanent increase in an ability score will allow extra advancement.

Will striking the wrong chord on a *lyre of building* destroy everything built with it?
Striking the wrong chord on a ***lyre of building*** negates everything accomplished with the lyre that week, so all structures created during that time will be wholly undone–but not ***all*** structures ever made with this item (see the ***DMG,*** page 149).

How do you determine how long a *crystal ball* can be used with each use, when the total viewing time varies with the chance to locate each subject?
The limits on a ***crystal ball*** apply on a per-subject basis. How long the mage observes one subject does not affect how long he can observe another. I recommend that you limit ***crystal ball*** use to no more than eight hours per day, and count each failed location attempt as one viewing and 10 minutes of use (see the ***DMG,*** page 141).

Continued on page 102

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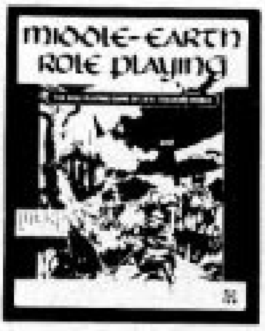

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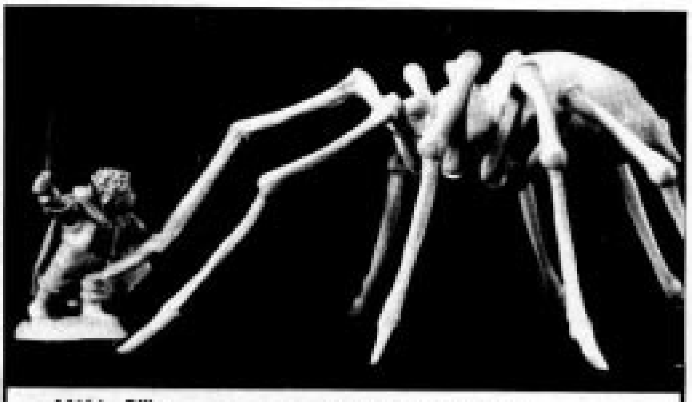

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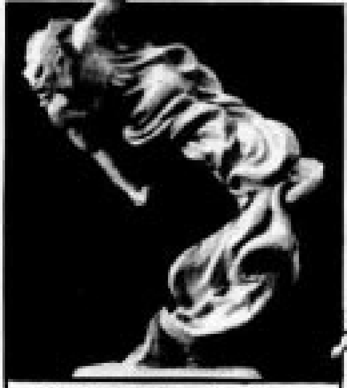

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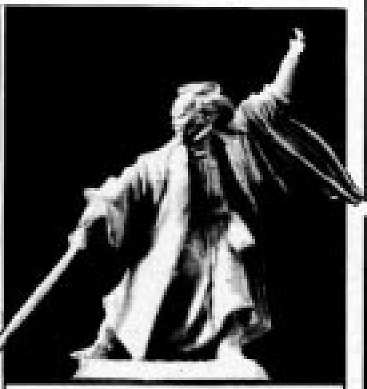

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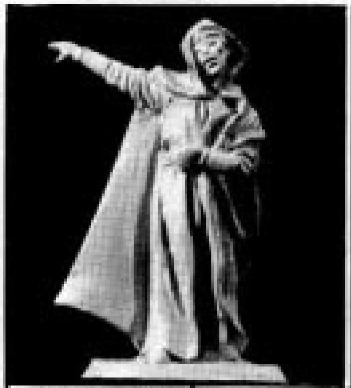

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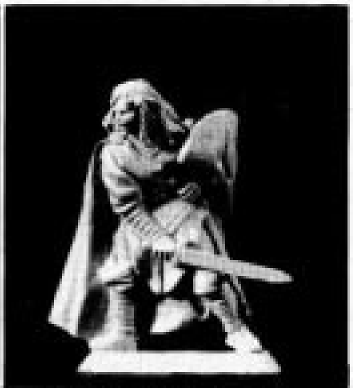

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The summons issued

Casting the *find familiar* spell (described in the AD&D® 2nd Edition ***Player's Handbook,*** page 134) is no easy undertaking. The character must be prepared to voice the correct incantation for up to 24 hours without rest and without making a mistake. The concentration required is enormous, and the effort is exhausting. To get an accurate idea of what is involved, try repeating a simple Mother Goose rhyme while standing next to a smoking barbecue grill, to simulate the spell's casting. Getting through even five minutes of the ritual requires not only high intelligence but a hardy constitution (and possibly asbestos robes).

The incantation produces a trance in which the wizards mind and senses become attuned with those of the familiar. The mental and physical link is permanent, and the difficulty of achieving this determines the highly variable casting time of 1-24 hours. If a familiar has not appeared in that time, the summoner cannot cast that spell again for a year's time due to the spell's power and its grueling nature.

The environment in which the spell is cast has an important influence on the kind of creature that appears. In a city or village, a cat has the edge over the others, and the DM might wish to adjust the odds in its favor. Out in the country, the odds favor the crow and ferret. In the wilderness, hawks have favor. If the spell is cast at night, the owl is a logical choice. The time of year is also something to consider. A wizard casting the spell during the migration season (positioned under known flight paths) has a greater success of obtaining a hawk than does a wizard who doesn't bother with such details. When the summons is performed in winter or above the permafrost line and a toad is the result, another die roll should be allowed. Otherwise, the DM may decide the spell has failed and the character can try again in another year.

Once the familiar has joined up with its wizard, the DM must think about the effect the newcomer will have on the other animals in the party. If the wizard has a ferret and another character keeps guard dogs or a hungry falcon, trouble could easily erupt unless everyone is very careful.

Problems may occur between fellow spell-casters as well. If a wizard is attending a convention of spell-casters, and his omnivorous crow gobbles up someone's toad, what should he do? The luckless character and his crow could be blasted into an unknown dimension unless he makes up for the blunder. If the offended wizard is his equal in levels and spells, the two might become enemies for life, providing the PC with a constant and active source of bedevilment.

To limit a familiar is to limit the development of an interesting nonplayer character. A closer look reveals the many opportunities that can be employed by the player and DM to increase the enjoyment of the game. The following profiles are on the ordinary and apparently nonmagical familiars listed in the ***Player's Handbook.*** They are the familiars most frequently used, but because they are rather mundane, they are also the least studied.

Cats

Cats are the animals with which most players are familiar. Many players own cats themselves and are often intimately acquainted with feline personalities and quirks–but not all their potential skills.

For example, everyone knows cats see well in the dark, but few are aware that if a cat can see the sun, it can't get lost. Cats have highly accurate internal clocks that regulate their daily activities with the same precision as a wristwatch. Furthermore, a cat can be hundreds of miles away from home and instinctively compare the position of the sun with its memory of where it ***should*** be at any given time of day. If the sun doesn't look right, the cat keeps walking until it does. The cat has a general (if unconscious) idea of how far away home is and a clear and certain knowledge of its direction. Consequently, if a wizard has a permanent base and calls it home, his cat may use it as a navigational point in much the same manner as modern sailors use Greenwich, England. For a cat, home is its prime meridian.

Cats have five more sacral vertebrae than people do, enabling them to twist 180°, leap four times their body length, and even change direction in midair. This exceptional speed and agility is indeed in their favor in a combat situation. Anyone who's given a bath to an unwilling cat can testify to its strength and ferocity.

Cat familiars are more intelligent than other familiars, and are thus able to mentally communicate with their masters. Many people believe cats are unintelligent, but cats operate on a level on which instinct is stronger than intellect. Within the animal world, cats are highly successful predators, swift and deadly. Cats like affection but don't always seek it out as a dog might; they are highly opinionated about what and whom they like.

If the DM takes the part of a mage's cat familiar, some interesting mental conversations are sure to take place. A wizard who tells his cat, "Leave the room. I want to talk to these people but they're allergic to you," is asking for a debate. The cat's ego will be offended, and it may demand an apology or a bribe before leaving. On the other hand, an urgent command such as: "Let's get out of here! The dragon wants to fry us!" is clearly understood and obeyed because it is a matter of survival and common sense.

Cats don't like change and may be less than enthusiastic when their master comes home and announces they're going on an adventure. Cats prefer a regular schedule, regular meals, petting, and patches of sunlight in which to doze frequently (pleasures that are in short supply in dungeons).

Because of the disruptive nature of their reproductive cycle, an unneutered cat may cause many problems for his master. Males disappear for days or weeks at a time if they're busy fighting rivals for their fair ladies. Likewise, a pregnant female is more interested in finding a comfortable place to have her young than in adventuring. Worse, females not allowed to mate are subject to serious disorders of their reproductive organs and have been known to die from the complications. One way around this problem is to say that the animal has been magically neutered by the powers that brought it to the wizard and leave it at that. Otherwise, the DM can arrange to have the PC work out the solution for himself. This can result in a lively play situation, such as the following:

A wizard, his new feline familiar, and the rest of the party take lodgings at a local inn, intent on rising early for the next day's hard travel. At 2 A.M., however, the wizard is suddenly roused from sleep by a terrible tearing pain along his chest and stomach. (The nightmare he'd been having about being torn apart by a ferocious monster he was fighting seems to have come true. His yells raise the rest of the house from a comfortable sleep. Ever on guard, the nervous PCs lurch from their beds ready for combat, frightening the innkeepers and any other NPCs they meet. Upon investigating, the wizard discovers he is not, after all, the victim of some secret attack; indeed, he is not even injured. Investigation shows that his (male) cat went prowling, got into a fight with another male, and lost. The wizards empathic bond with the cat did the rest. The party isn't going to be well disposed at being awakened for what they consider a trivial cause, and the disruption might even get them thrown out of the inn unless suitable compensation is offered to the innkeeper. The cat now requires a few days of rest to heal from its fight, which may cause a delay in everyone's plans.

Crows

Crows are large perching birds that prefer noisy flocks to solitude. Ordinary crows can be trained to repeat words. In a gaming situation, a DM may allow a crow familiar to engage in true (if limited) conversation. Though a crow can mentally communicate with its master, that won't be very satisfying to its naturally gregarious personality. Before too long, a clever bird will be adding its observations and opinions to the general talk–probably far more often than its master wishes. Of course, all conversation will be in a rough crow's voice and with a strong crow accent.

As mentioned in the rules, crows have

excellent vision and can scout open territory for the party, but the wizard may be reluctant to let it do so. Crows have several natural enemies. In the wilderness, a crow's only defense against a hungry hunting bird is luck and a fast set of wings. If a crow knows or suspects that hawks are in the area (it can always ask other birds and its fellow crows), it may reasonably refuse to perform scouting duties for the party. If it does consent to scout, the DM should remember that crows are literal-minded when it comes to reporting what they see, and they might not volunteer potentially useful information. A crow sent aloft to look for lurking kobolds may come back with a truthful negative—but half an hour later, the party is attacked by orcs (*Wizard:* "Why didn't you tell us there were orcs ahead?" Crow: "You didn't ask!").

Crows love bright, shiny objects and enjoy these as rewards from their master as much as they enjoy food. Crows are fond of jewels, but a poor wizard can do just as well presenting his crow with bits of colored glass, polished metal, and mirrors; crows are interested in flash, not value. If a crow excitedly tells its master it's found a treasure trove, it will probably lead him to a glinting pile of broken glass. A disappointed reaction won't be lost on the bird, who may feel highly insulted at the lack of gratitude. The DM can balance things having the bird stumble on a real treasure and bring back a tantalizing sample to show off. Because of the past insult the crow may be less than cooperative in recalling where the rest of the goodies are. A crow's master should be very understanding.

Hawks

A specific type of hawk is not mentioned in the rules of familiars, though there are many kinds. For the game, the DM can choose between the peregrine, a bird favored for hunting by European nobility, and the smaller and appropriately named merlin. Both birds are expert acrobatic flyers—a necessity, considering that both prey on other birds for food, diving in on flocks and seizing a meal in midair. The major differences between the two are size and methods of taking food. The peregrine eats its catch where it falls. The merlin tries to carry its catch away.

A wizard with a hawk can expect to spend a lot of time outdoors allowing it to hunt (unless he can secure a steady supply of pigeons). It is a good idea to let the bird do some hunting so it can stay in shape and in practice. If the wizard is lost and starving in the wilderness, his hawk can at least supply him the bare essentials of basic protein and show him to the nearest water supply.

The eyesight of hawks is no less than astonishing. They can pick out prey or objects miles away—objects made invisible to humans by sheer distance. The advantages of such excellent vision should not be lost on a party adventuring in unexplored and dangerous country. Though more reticent than crows, hawks are more practical when it comes to the safety of the party, and they accurately report what they see. A wizard can easily acquire a steady job as a scout for an army if he has a taste for the active life (although it would allow little time to study magic).

Female hawks are called falcons; males are tiercels, a word derived from the Latin *tertius,* meaning "third." Among larger hawks, males are about one-third smaller than females. Peregrines range all over the world, but merlins prefer northern climates. A wizard's location as he gains a hawk familiar indicates which is most likely to appear. If he's in the far northern or far southern regions of a world, a DM could give a 25% chance of a merlin being summoned instead of a peregrine.

It is unlikely that a member of a mated pair will appear upon the wizard's initial search, but if the wizard settles down, his familiar might acquire a spouse. The new (assumedly female) bird is wild and will raise a brood to have a sensible fear of man. There is no danger that a mate can draw a falcon familiar away from its master. In addition, the presence of falcons keeps bird and mouse populations down for the tenant farmers.

No studies have indicated that hawks suffer in the same way as cats from not mating. Thus, if the DM wishes to skirt the whole issue, the wizard can simply keep the bird away from its own kind. In turn, he must provide it with his own attentive companionship to prevent it from becoming bored or uncomfortable, especially during the migration seasons.

Owls

A player gaining an owl may wish to do some research to determine what it looks like. There are over 30 different kinds of screech owls from which to choose, ranging all over the world. It shouldn't be difficult to find one indigenous to any particular geographic zone.

As with hawks, female owls are generally larger than males, but both sexes are lighter in weight than they would appear from their full-feathered coverings. Their upright postures and large, penetrating eyes have subjected them to more anthropomorphism than almost any other bird. The chief characteristics of owls exploited in modern animated films are those of wisdom, pomposity, and the generation of fearful awe, all of which can be used as springboards to create interesting NPCs.

Owls' eyes cannot turn in their sockets, but their necks are extremely flexible, with powerful muscles allowing them to rotate their heads 270° with great speed and ease. The old wives' tale that you can walk around an owl and it will completely rotate its head to keep facing you is false-the owl's head simply whips around so quickly that the action is easily missed within the blink of an eye.

Owls are efficient hunters due to their superior eyesight and incredible hearing. They improve their binocular vision by bobbing their heads or even turning them upside down. While this appears comical, it is actually quite functional, allowing owls to sight a target and swoop down on it with great accuracy. Owls can successfully hunt in nearly total darkness as long as the prey is moving. Their distinctive facial disk helps funnel telltale sounds to their ears. One ear, usually the right, is 50% larger than the other and is placed higher on the head. This difference enables the owl to fix the location of its prey. Owl feathers are covered with a velvetlike pile that increases drag and lessens flight efficiency, but allows them to fly in utter silence (surprising prey on a 1-5 on 1d6 at night, or on a 1-4 on 1d6 in the day).

Far from being lazy, owls are ever-watchful. Even when they are apparently asleep, they are always listening and are aware of everything around them. Despite their phlegmatic daytime behavior, owl familiars can rouse themselves to ask questions and demand answers from their masters. Their curiosity is very high, especially when it concerns food. They are fond of giving detailed lectures on the gastronomic delights of eating mice, rabbits, or the wizard's dinner.

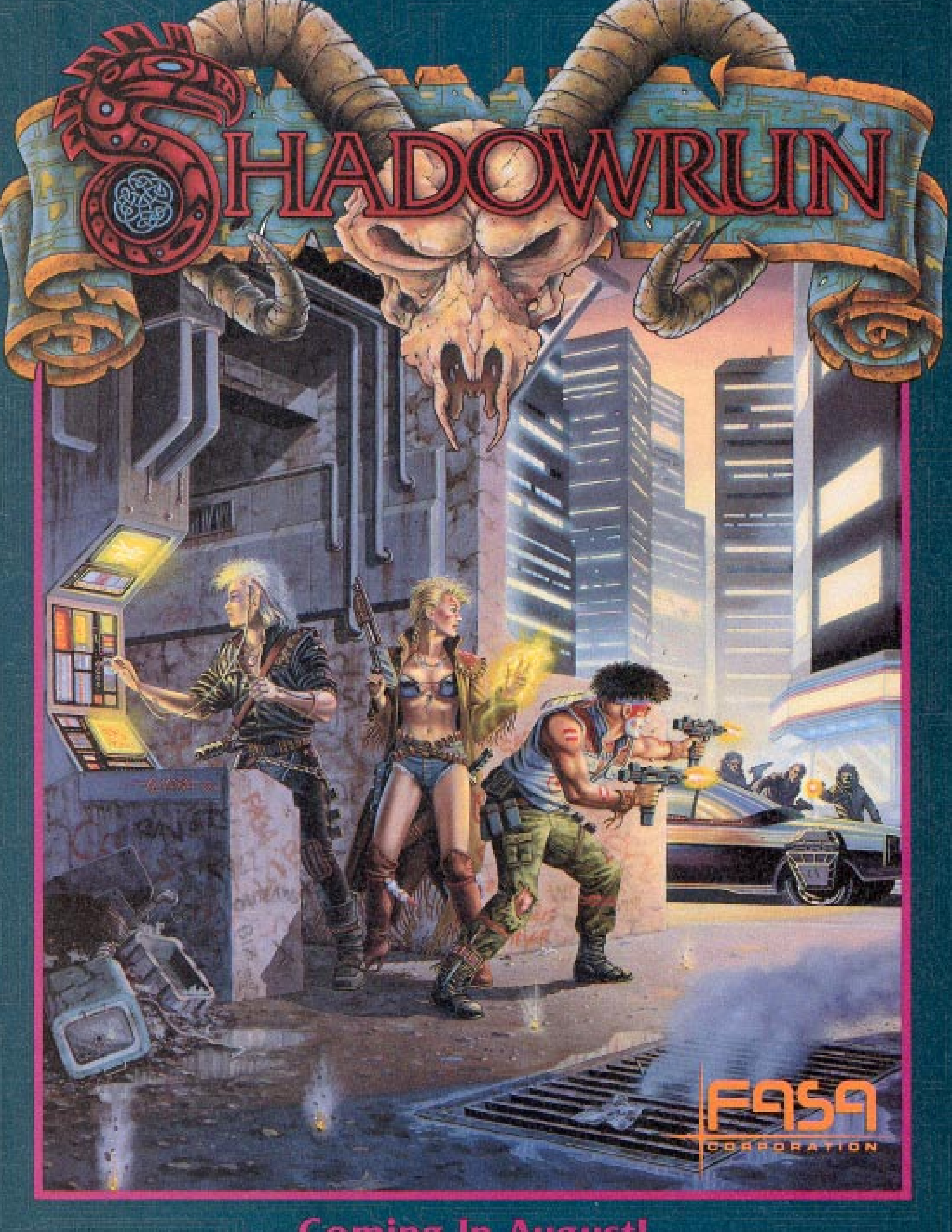
It is almost impossible to sneak up on an owl. A lenient DM might allow a wizard with an owl familiar to never be surprised. (The owl certainly won't be.)

Note: Since hawks and owls will probably spend much of their time riding on shoulders, the PC who has one should adjust or reinforce his wardrobe. Birds have powerful grips, and hawks and owls have razor-sharp talons. Though not permitted to wear armor, a wizard should be allowed to strap a thick leather pad over one shoulder for protection from his bird's claws. A falconer's gauntlet is another alternative, but it might interfere with spell-casting, particularly with regard to speed and dexterity.

Weasels & ferrets

Weasels are often confused with their ferret cousins, but there are enough major differences between the two to warrant an alteration of the rules in favor of ferrets. Ferrets are, on the average, 4" longer than weasels, and they take well to being domesticated (which is almost impossible with weasels, which are even wilder than the most irascible minks). Given a good diet and grooming, ferrets even smell better; a weasel's musky odor is only slightly less offensive than that of a skunk.

A DM may want to stick to the rules and insist on a weasel, but it would be unfair to give a PC and the rest of the party a bad-tempered, smelly familiar. It could, of course, be a magically tamed weasel, but magic can only do so much before in-



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Ferrets are insatiably curious. They are natural explorers and are able to slip easily into pockets, cling comfortably to a shoulder, and sniff the wind for information. A wizard will be hit with a barrage of questions from his ferret, and he may acquire a reputation for being eccentric as he continually talks to his companion. A creative player can develop these one-sided conversations enough so the ferret has its own distinct personality, not unlike that of a ventriloquist's dummy: We know there's only one person making the jokes and handing out insults, but a well-run routine can capture an audience's heart.

Slender and lithe, ferrets move with great stealth and use their sharp ears to the advantage of their masters. If a wizard wants to listen in on a private conversation on the other side of a busy inn, he must often resort to divination spells. Sending his ferret over instead works just as well, has no cost in magic, and is less conspicuous than outright spying. The wizard may thus make a startling first impression if he appears to know all about people before meeting them simply by letting his familiar do a little eavesdropping. Higher fees may be commanded for his services if he works things right.

Toads

Few wizards would want a toad for a familiar. Toads are almost a punishment. True, they have wide-angle vision, but they are also very nearsighted and react only if something is moving within tongue-grabbing distance. About all that toads really do is burrow in damp ground, eat, mate, and burrow again. They hibernate in winter, limiting their master's travels to warm climates (unless he wants to risk losing his cold-blooded companion to inclement weather).

Toads do not cause warts, but they have glands on their backs that secrete mild poisons. After handling his toad, a wizard should wash his hands lest he accidentally rubs his eyes; the secretions are very irritating and will burn. Toads taste terrible to dogs, usually causing them to foam at the mouth. Handling one particular kind of toad can cause death in dogs and young children.

Toads possess a second bladder and, if roughly handled (even by its master), might release the water stored there. A wizard who knows his toads will avoid handling his familiar as much as possible. Despite the tough look of the skin, it is easily damaged; even a minor break in the surface can lead to fatal fungus infections. If taken along on travels, the toad should be placed in a large jar lined with damp moss and leaves. The jar should also have holes in the top to allow fresh air. The toad must not be forced to live exclusively in water. Air and water are both absorbed through the skin, and though toads like dampness, too much water suffocates them.

Any conversation with a toad is bound to be limited, as it has few interests beyond eating and maintaining body comfort. A wizard trying to converse with this familiar must cope with a constant refrain for more and better food, or complaints about the temperature and humidity. The toad doesn't like travel (except during mating season) and will nag its master to settle down near a pond in a nice warm, damp forest. Much of the wizards time might be devoted to dangling bits of meat and bugs within tongue-grabbing distance and wriggling it in an appetizing way. A time-saving alternative is to construct a large terrarium and place the toad inside with a lot of tasty crickets. At least it'll get some exercise chasing after them (though its master might be annoyed with the noise the crickets make).

Familiar options

When a troublesome toad is rolled, should a DM allow a second roll, or simply dispense with dice and choose something else for the player? If no one objects and it helps speed the flow of the game, either option is fine. The point of the game is to entertain by keeping the players busy, and no character is going to progress far in levels if his familiar is too restrictive. Another advantage in choosing a familiar is that the DM may base it on or contrast it with the personality of the player and his character. Someone who is naturally inquisitive would be pleased to share company with a ferret. On the other hand, a ferret can draw out a shy player who must cope with never-ending questions and frequently bail his mischievous familiar out of trouble.

Since the wizard can be slain if his familiar is killed, it's logical that he will take great care of the creature if it is injured or sick. At the very least, the creature's pain and discomfort would be mentally distracting, thus interfering with the wizards spell-casting abilities. A smart DM can turn such a situation into a major campaign.

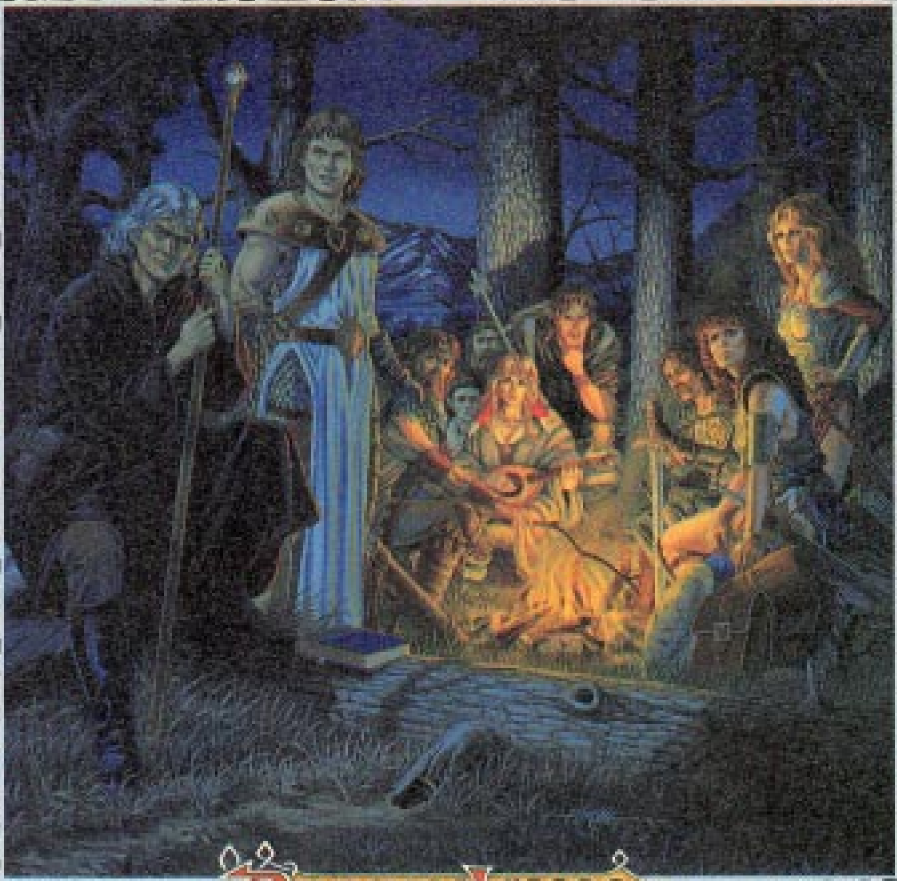
Suppose a wizard's cat becomes ill, perhaps terminally. Out of love for the creature, the spell-caster tries to find a cure for the cat. There may not be any high-level clerics or druids around willing to help a mere feline; alignment and racial troubles might be grounds for refusals, too. The wizard worries as his cat sinks faster. Finally, a helpful NPC suggests that the wizard seek out the nearest temple devoted to a deity whose worship involves felines. One of the clerics there will probably cure the familiar, but some service in return may be required. Depending on the wizards level, alignment, and wealth, this could be anything from publicly proclaiming the virtues of the religion involved to constructing a major temple in a city devoted an enemy deity.

A quick look in the back of *Legends & Lore* reveals a number of gods with various animals as their symbols. Crows have no special god, unless the DM allows them to be favorably considered by deities with ravens or other birds as their symbols. The ferret is also short-changed, but might nevertheless come under the heading of nature or animals in general for a god's sphere of influence. The Snake-Man in the American Indian mythos might help out an ailing toad, but a player would do well not to seek help from Laogzed, who is worshiped by human-eating troglodytes. In this case, if a toad is dying of natural causes (and not from some omission or error on the part of its master), perhaps the best thing is to go ahead and—forgive me—let it croak.

Any DM knows the importance of research for a good campaign; as a result, he should encourage interested players to do some research for themselves. A quick trip to the library is the best cure for ignorance about the familiar in question. Lucky players living near a zoo or nature center have the opportunity to view a living specimen and may even be able to talk with its caretaker. The DM should always stay a jump ahead of the players, fully researching all the animal familiars first, either to surprise others with his knowledge or to keep himself from being surprised. A PC seeking knowledge on how to properly care for his familiar can be relieved of excess cash by consulting various NPCs for advice. He may even find himself tangled up in a new adventure if things are worked right. Does he know that ferrets need a litter box? Does he know that owls must be able to keep their beaks trimmed or else they can't eat? Is he aware of the dire consequences of giving his cat too much milk?

A wizard should consider the pros and cons before summoning a familiar. Familiars should not be decorations; they should be an integral part of the game. They can aid and influence their masters for good or ill, and can make things more interesting for the party. Keep in mind that the wizard isn't just acquiring a pet; he is being linked to a companion for whom he must be responsible for the rest of its life. The familiar is a living being, devoted and supportive, sharing hurts and joys, willing even to die for its master. In turn, the familiar deserves fair treatment and good care for its well-being, no matter what the alignment of its master. Even Blofeld, the James Bond villain who appeared in ***Diamonds are Forever,*** loved and indulgently spoiled his cat. Ω

Before they were heroes...



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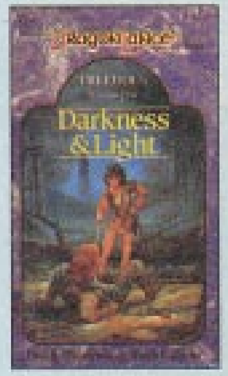
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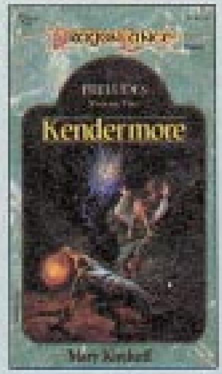
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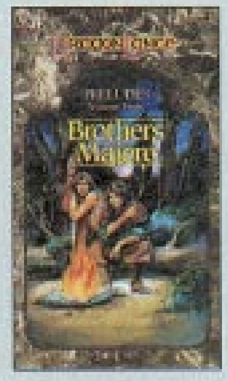
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Table 1
Alternative Spell Component Limitations

Component type	Spell type	Failure[1]	Range	Area of effect	Duration	Save
A	Offensive	Special [2]	½	½	½	+3
	Defensive	Special[3]	–	½	½	–
	Miscellaneous	Special[4]	–	–	¼	–
B	Offensive	30%	1/3	½	¼	+4
	Defensive	15%	–	½	½	–
	Miscellaneous	10%	–	–	½	–
C	Offensive	20%	¼	¼	–	+3
	Defensive	15%	–	–	½	–
	Miscellaneous	10%	–	–	½	–
D	Offensive	15%	–	–	½	+2
	Defensive	20%	–	½	–	–
	Miscellaneous	10%	–	–	¼	–

[1] 5% per level of the spell.
[2] 3% for each 1% of insufficient value.
[3] 2% for each 1% of insufficient value.
[4] 1% for each 1% of insufficient value.

1. Note in what particular ways the alternative substance differs from the standard material component. In this regard, there are several different categories of component variance:

A. The component is of the proper material type and form, but is of insufficient value. (For example, a magic-user who needs a gem worth no less than 5,000 gp for a *Drawmij's instant* ***summons*** spell tries the conjuration with a smaller gem valued at 3,000 gp.)

B. The component is of the proper material type and value, but is either flawed or of an improper form. (For example, a character requiring a jade circlet valued at 5,000 gp to enact a ***shape change*** spell attempts the spell-casting with a jade figurine of equal value.)

C. The component is of the proper form and value, but is of the wrong material. (For example, a wizard trying to cast a ***Rary's mnemonic enhancer*** spell without the blood of a black dragon resorts to the use of red dragon blood instead, or perhaps casts a ***sleep*** spell with marigold petals as opposed to rose petals.)

D. The component is of improper material or form (or both), but contains the essence of the attempted spell. (For example, a character in an ice cave who lacks a carved crystal cone to cast a *cone of cold* spell uses a cone of carved ice as the spell component.

2. Determine the particular spell type as listed below, thereafter referencing Table 1 to note spell modifiers.

A. *Offensive:* An offensive spell is one that directly affects an opponent through either damage or other baneful effects, negating or reducing that opponent's combat effectiveness ***(lightning bolt, sleep, curse,*** etc.).

B. *Defensive:* A defensive spell is any spell that affects the caster or his group by providing either protective benefits or greater combat potential ***(protection from evil, shield, bless,*** etc.).

C. *Miscellaneous:* A miscellaneous spell is any spell that does not fit into the other categories ***(fly, shape change, spider climb,*** etc.).

If a proposed modification to the spell function is inappropriate, it should be ignored. For example, the duration of a slow spell is 3 rounds + 1 round/level. This figure may easily be halved or quartered as indicated by Table 1. The instantaneous duration of a ***fireball,*** on the other hand, cannot be practically handled in the same manner and thus is ignored if Table 1 indicates such a modification.

Is different better?

While the use of substitute material components in an emergency can lessen a spell's effectiveness, it is also possible that, by incorporating very rare and exotic components, the functions of a spell can be heightened in intensity. Exactly what components accomplish this and to what extent they do so is left to the discretion of the DM. The following section offers some suggestions on this matter.

The specifics of how a substitute or additional material component is used during spell-casting are not necessarily important (although the DM might inform the players of his own rulings in specific cases). DMs can generally assume that the exotic component is either mixed in with the normal component prior to casting, or that it is used in place of the typical material component (for example, making use of part of a sandman as the component for a ***sleep*** spell rather than using normal sand). There should always be at least a 5% chance of spell failure due to improper mixing of the component, its innate magical nature, etc. The spell malfunction percentages given in the following sections may prove helpful in arriving at a comprehensive set of guidelines for this purpose.

Consider the following example. In this article, bulette hide is listed as increasing the potential of an ***armor*** spell. A piece of finely cured leather blessed by a cleric is the standard component. Using bulette hide in place of this leather reasonably places the substitute material component in category C. As *armor* is a defensive spell, we note that the failure percentage totals 20% (the listed penalty modifier for the spell's duration is not considered).

One option the DM may wish to explore when checking for spell failure is to deduct 1% from the spell-failure roll for each level of the caster, thus reflecting his experience in dealing with magical forces. Still, a 5% chance of spell failure should always exist, regardless of bonuses.

Most of the time, substitute material components are acquired during the course of adventuring, though it is possible that an alchemist or component source may have a stock of a particular item. Table 2 shows the percentage chance that an alchemist or component source may have these ingredients, as well as how many lots are available, their prices, and the time between checks to see if more such items have been obtained. The prices paid by dealers for these items are usually between 10% to 20% of the retail prices. When these materials are obtained from creatures slain during adventures, it is suggested that each creature provide no more than 1-6 uses of the component. This small amount can be justified by the fact that a material component must be in good condition, and only this many component bits survive untouched by sword blows, spell damage, etc.

Table 2
Special Component Availability and Cost

Component	Availability	Number	Cost (gp)	Check time
Bat, fire (ichor, dram)	10%	1-4	500	1 per 4 months
Beetle, fire (glands)	40%	1-2	300	1 per 6 months
Beholder (eye)	12%	1-4	500	1 per 6 months
Blink dog (heart)	12%	1-6	750	1 per year
Bulette (hide)	12%	1-3	500	1 per 6 months
Couatl (feather)	5%	1-4	1,000	1 per year
Cyclops (eye)	15%	1	250	1 per 6 months
Devil, styx (talisman)	1%	1	5,000	1 per 2 years
Displacer beast (hide)	12%	1	750	1 per 4 months
Djinni (blood, vial)	2%	1	1,000	1 per year
Doppleganger (pituitary gland)	12%	1	750	1 per 6 months
Efreet (blood, vial)	5%	1	1,000	1 per year
Eye of fear and flame (gem)	2%	1	7,000	1 per 2 years
Eye killer (eye)	12%	1-2	500	1 per 6 months
Flail snail (shell)	10%	1-3	300	1 per year
Gibbering mouther (lips)	5%	1-4	1,000	1 per year
Gloomwing (wings)	20%	1-2	500	1 per 6 months
Golem, iron (pieces)	35%	1-10	400	1 per 4 months
Hollyphant (trunk)	2%	1-10	2,000	1 per year
Imp (blood, vial)	5%	1	750	1 per 6 months
Invisible stalker (ichor, vial)	5%	1	750	1 per 6 months
Lolth (spider silk)	1%	1-3	10,000	1 per 2 years
Myconid (spores)	15%	1-6	1,000	1 per 6 months
Necromancer/evil cleric (skull)[1]	5%	1	5,000	1 per year
Nightmare (hoof)	5%	1-4	5,000	1 per year
Obliviax	15%	1-6	500	1 per 3 months
Para-elemental, smoke (smoke, vial)	10%	1	2,000	1 per year
Planetar (feather)	1%	1	5,000	1 per 2 years
Sandman (sand, pinch)	5%	1-20	300	1 per year
Soil (20 lbs., from druid's grove)	10%	1-2	500	1 per year
Solar (feather)	1%	1	5,000	1 per 2 years
Son of Kyuss (skull)	10%	1-3	1,000	1 per year
Spectre (dust)	40%	1-6	500	1 per 3 months
Spider, phase (web)	20%	1-4	1,000	1 per 6 months
Telegraph vine	10%	1-6	500	1 per 2 years
Thief/assassin (ear)[2]	10%	1-2	1,000	1 per 4 months
Troglodyte (pituitary gland)	35%	1-4	250	1 per year
Volt (tail)	15%	1-3	500	1 per year
Wraith (dust)	20%	1-4	500	1 per 6 months

[1] Necromancer or evil cleric must be 10th level or higher.

[2] Thief or assassin must be 5th level or higher.

Alternate components: Magic-users

The following gives some alternate spell components for magic-user spells, as per the 1st Edition ***Players Handbook*** (PH) and ***Unearthed Arcana*** (UA). The book reference and spell level follow the spell's name; spell-failure chances are given in parentheses.

Animate dead –PH/5
Powdered skull of a necromancer or evil cleric, 10th level or higher: Animated creatures gain maximum hit points (25%).

Armor—UA/1
Bulette hide: Recipient gains AC 6 (20%).

Displacer beast hide: Recipient gains benefits as though wearing a *cloak of displacement*, including missed initial melee attack; thereafter, armor class is equal to *leather armor* +2 until dispelled normally (20%).

Clairaudience –PH/3
Ear of a thief or assassin not less than 5th level: Duration increases to 1 turn/level (25%).

Conjure (earth) elemental –PH/5
20 lbs. of soil from the grove of a druid not less than 12th level: The elemental conjured willingly serves the caster (25%).

Dancing lights –PH/1
Fire beetle glands: Duration of spell increased to 2 turns/level (15%).

Delayed blast fireball— PH/7
Red gem from an eye of fear and flame: Damage is calculated at +2 hp/HD, not + 1 hp/HD (45%).

Disintegrate –PH/6
Disintegrate ray beholder eye: Saving throw made at −3 (40%).

Enchanted weapon —PH/4
Powdered magical melee weapon of + 1 or better enchantment: Imbues a non-magical weapon with equivalent bonuses to hit and to damage (30%).

Enlarge —PH/1
A pinch of powdered iron from an iron golem: Growth potential increases to 25%

per level of the caster to a maximum increase of 400% (5%).

ESP –PH/2
Pituitary gland of a doppleganger: Spell duration increases to 1 turn/level (20%).

Feather fall **—PH/1**
A feather from a couatl: Spell duration increased to 1 round/level (5%).

Fireball **—Ph/3**
A dram of fire bat ichor: Damage is calculated with + 1 hp/HD (30%).

Fly **—PH/3**
A feather from a planetar or solar: Spell duration increases to 1 hour/level (15%).

Imprisonment **—PH/9**
A styx devil's talisman: Caster may cast this spell upon a target even if target's name and background are unknown **(55%).**

Infravision **—PH/3**
An eye from an eye killer: Spell duration increases to 24 hours at any level of the caster (25%).

Invisibility **—PH/2**
A dram of invisible stalker ichor: Recipient gains a saving throw each round to avoid losing invisibility if making an attack (30%).

Lightning bolt **—PH/3**
A volt tail: Area of effect is doubled (with regard to either width or length, as player chooses) (30%).

Magic mouth **-PH/2**
Two lips from a gibbering mouther: The spell gains a permanent duration (20%).

Message **—PH/1**
A piece of telegraph vine: While not listed in any of the source books, telegraph vine is a plant existing in the real world; if it can be found in the PCs' plane of existence, it boosts the range of the spell to 1 mile/level(15%).

Mordenkainen's faithful hound **—PH/5**
Blink dog heart: Spell duration increases to 1 hour/level (35%).

Otiluke's telekinetic sphere **—UA/8**
Telekinesis beholder eye: Spell duration increases to 1 turn/level (50%).

Scare **—PH/2**
Powdered skull from a son of Kyuss: Duration increases to 2 rounds/level (25%).

Sleep **—PH/1**
A portion of a sandman's body: All creatures of 8 HD or less within area of effect must save vs. spells or fall asleep (5%).

Stinking cloud —PH/2
Pituitary gland from a troglodyte: Duration increases to 2 rounds/level (25%).

Web –PH/2
Phase spider webbing: *Web* gains the potential of also entrapping astral/ethereal creatures, including noncorporeal undead (10%).
A portion of Lolth's spider silk: Duration of spell increased to 1 hour/level (15%).

Wizard eye **—PH/4**
Eye of a cyclops: Duration increases to 1 turn/level (30%).

Volley **—UA/7**
Powdered flail snail shell: Caster gains + 3 to saving throw (45%).

Alternate components: Illusionists

The following gives some alternate spell components for spells used by illusionists, as per the 1st Edition ***Players Handbook*** (PH) and ***Unearthed Arcana*** **(UA).** The book reference and spell level follow the spell's name; spell-failure chances are given in parentheses.

Advanced illusion **—UA/5**
A vial of efreet blood: Duration increases to 2 rounds/level (40%).

Confusion **—PH/4**
Wings of a gloomwing: Duration increases to 2 rounds/level (35%).

Deafness **—PH/2**
A portion of a hollyphant's trunk: Spells area of effect increases to a cone 1" wide by 1" high by 3" long (20%).

Dream **—UA/5**
Myconid hallucinatory spores: If the spores are inhaled prior to sleep, the spell functions in half the time normally required; there is, however, a 10% chance the dream is a twisted nightmare, thus perverting the intention (35%).
Obliviax: An illusionist who eats memory moss prior to ***dreaming*** (if the saving throw is successful) increases the effectiveness of the spell to equal *alter reality;* failure to make the saving throw requires the illusionist to save vs. spells or be stricken with insanity (35%).

Minor creation **—PH/4**
A vial of djinni blood: Items created with the spell gain a 25% chance of permanency (30%).

Phantom armor **—UA/1**
Bulette hide: The armor withstands 2 hp damage/level (20%).

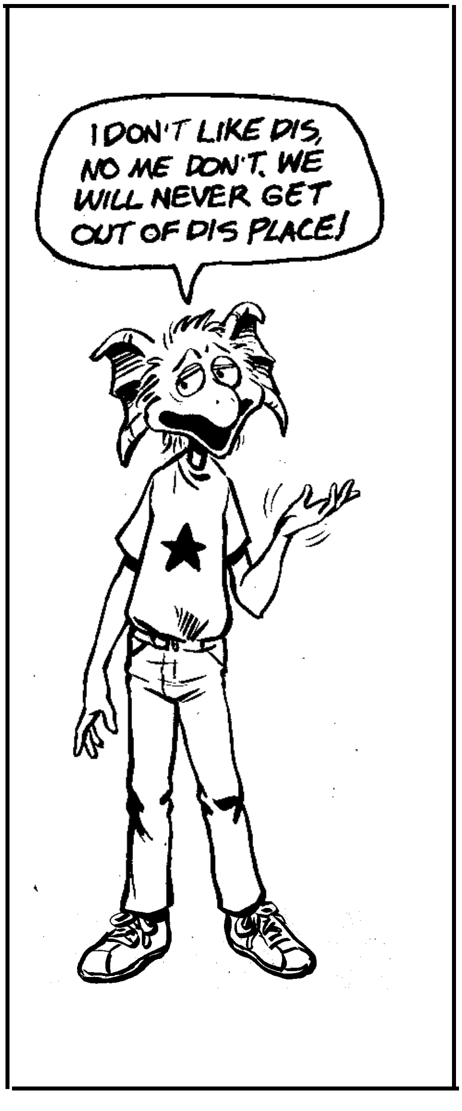
Phantom steed **—UA/3**
Hoof of a nightmare: Capabilities of the steed are improved by one level on the ability table (see ***Unearthed Arcana,*** page 68) (25%).

Programmed illusion **—PH/6**
Vial of efreet blood: Duration increased to 2 rounds/level (45%).

Wall of fog **—PH/1**
Vial containing smoke from a smoke para-elemental: There is a 25% chance that the wall also duplicates a ***stinking cloud*** within its confines (20%).

Wraithform **—UA/3**
A pinch of wraith dust: Duration increases to 5 rounds/level (25%).

Vision **—PH/7**
A vial of imp blood: Caster gains + 1 to any other modifiers if contacting an archdevil (35%). **Ω**


I DON'T LIKE DIS, NO ME DON'T. WE WILL NEVER GET OUT OF DIS PLACE!

"Gaze into my crystal ball...."

A close look at magical scrying devices and spells

by Krys Stromsted

Illustration by Margaret Palmer

The use of crystal balls and other scrying devices and spells (such as *magic font, magic mirror,* and *reflecting pool,* from *Unearthed Arcana)* is an area of the AD&D® 1st Edition game that has not been completely explored. Using the present rules, a scryer (regardless of his level) always has the same chance to locate his subject, as well as gaining unlimited scrying range if he is using a scrying device. With the introduction of these variations, definite range limitations are added to insure game balance. This article also introduces changes in scrying duration, subject-location percentages, scrying-device composition, range and duration bonuses, and special features of scrying devices.

Range, size, and weight

The first area covered herein concerns scrying-device range, size, and weight. Table 1 covers *crystal balls,* and Table 2 covers magic mirrors (such as *mirrors of mental prowess).* These tables include notes for scrying into other planes. The weight for a scrying device does not include the weight of a stand or frame (for ball or mirror, respectively) on which the device is mounted when found. To figure the weight of such an item, roll 1d6: 1-2, 25% of scrying-device weight; 3-4, 50%; 5, 75%; and 6, 100%.

Another important consideration is to establish scrying ranges for spells *(magic font, magic mirror,* and *reflecting pool).* Table 3 gives these basic scrying spell's ranges.

Table 4 gives range bonuses for spell- and device-users who have high prime attributes (intelligence for magic-users and illusionists; wisdom for clerics and druids; both intelligence and wisdom for all other classes-e.g., rangers, paladins, and bards).

Frequency and duration

Frequency is the number of times a scrying device may be used per day, and duration is the length of time the device may be used at one sitting. No provisions were made in the 1st Edition rules for giving bonuses to high-level scryers using spells or devices. Logically, it seems that a 10th-level magic-user should be able to view a subject longer than a 1st-level magic-user under the same conditions. Table 5 remedies this situation by giving a scryer a certain amount of scrying time per day per level. Table 6 gives an optional time expansion for scrying spells, and Table 7 gives time bonuses for scryers with high prime attributes.

A scryer may extend his scrying duration by employing *limited wish, alter reality,* or *wish,* or by using a scrying device with a time bonus. If wish-type magic is used, the scryer must first save vs. spells. If the saving throw is missed, the scryer is *feebleminded* for 1-4 days and no benefit is gained. In any case, the scryer who extends his scrying duration using *wish*-type magic is exhausted for 2-7 days fol-

Table 1

Crystal Balls: Range, Size, and Weight

Die roll	Range (in miles)	Diameter	Weight (in lbs.)
01-10	50	3"	4.2
11-20	100	4"	9.9
21-30	150	5"	19.4
31-40	200	6"	33.5
41-50	250	6"	33.5
51-60	300	6"	33.5
61-70	400[1]	6"	33.5
71-80	500[2]	9"	113.1
81-85	750[3]	9"	113.1
86-90	1,000[4]	9"	113.1
91-95	1,500[4]	12"	268.2
96-99	2,000[5]	12"	268.2
00	3,000[5]	12"	268.2

[1] Can view Ethereal plane.
[2] Can view Inner planes.
[3] Can view Astral and Inner planes.
[4] Can view Inner and Outer planes.
[5] Can view all planes of existence.

Table 2

Magic Mirrors: Range, Size, and Weight

Die roll	Range (in miles)	Size	Weight (in lbs.)
01-10	50	4" X 8"	1
11-20	100	8" X 16"	4
21-30	150	1'X2'	9
31-40	200	2'X4'	36
41-50	250	2'X4'	36
51-60	300	2'X4'	36
61-70	400[1]	2'X4'	36
71-80	500[2]	3'X5'	68
81-85	750[3]	3'X5'	68
86-90	1,000[4]	4'X6'	108
91-95	1,500[4]	4' X 6'	108
96-99	2,000[5]	5' X 7'	394
00	3,000[5]	6'X8'	540

[1] Can view Ethereal plane.
[2] Can view Inner planes.
[3] Can view Astral and Inner planes.
[4] Can view Inner and Outer planes.
[5] Can view all planes of existence.

Table 3

Scrying-Spell Ranges

Spell-caster	Range per level (in miles)
Cleric/Druid	35
Magic-user/Illusionist	25
Others*	15

* Includes bards, paladins, and rangers. Levels are counted from the first level at which these classes receive spells (8th for rangers, 9th for paladins, 1st for bards). Thus, an 11th-level ranger using *reflecting pool* can scry up to 60 miles.

lowing the scrying. The maximum amount of time a scryer could receive by *wishing* is double his normal scrying time.

Table 4

Scrying Range Bonuses *

Prime attribute	Range bonus per level (in miles)
16	5
17	10
18	15
19	20
20+	25

* Bonuses apply only to characters who can cast spells.

Table 5

Scrying Duration

Spell-caster	Scrying duration in rounds/level)
Cleric/Druid	5
Magic-user/Illusionist	6
Other spell-casters *	4

* Includes bards, paladins, and rangers. Levels are counted from the first level at which these classes receive spells (8th for rangers, 9th for paladins, 1st for bards). Thus, an 11th-level ranger using *reflecting pool* can scry for 16 additional rounds per sitting.

Table 6

Expanded Scrying Spell Duration

Spell	Old duration	New duration
Magic font	1 round per vial	2 rounds per vial
Magic mirror	1 round/level	6 rounds per level
Reflective pool	1 round/level	5 rounds per level

Subject location

According to the 1st Edition *DMG*, page 141, a scryer can locate an object with relative ease—even if all he has to go on is a small scrap of clothing or a slight amount of information. These limited materials give the scryer a fair chance of locating his subject. Table 8 introduces a revised set of location percentages that makes subject location more unpredictable. Positive and negative modifiers are provided.

When the scryer initially attempts to locate his subject, it takes 1-4 rounds of scrying time unless the scrying device has a "memory" device (like a modern calculator) and the subject is in a memory slot. In this case, subject location takes only one segment. Subject-memory scrying devices have a total of 2-24 memory slots each; a slot's subject can be changed at the will of the device's user, but the user must first locate the new subject, concentrate upon the subject for five rounds, then state which memory slot will respond to that subject. Devices having such memory slots are worth a 10% bonus on their gold-piece and experience-point values.

Table 7

Scrying Time Bonuses *

Prime attribute	Time bonus (rounds/level)
16	1
17	2
18	3
19	4
20+	5

* Bonuses apply only to characters who can cast spells.

Special features

Tables 9, 10, and 11 are optional tables included to make scrying devices more powerful and valuable. Table 9 shows how many special features a scrying device may have. Table 10 lists these special features, and Table 11 lists materials from which *crystal balls* may be made. In all, these tables can be used to make an otherwise common *crystal ball* into a powerful, enchanted gemstone of immense value. Special features for these unique items follow:

Deflection: This feature adds a +4 saving throw to the scrying device's saving throws vs. any attack form.

Intelligence: Roll 3d6 for the innate intelligence of the scrying device. For every point of intelligence, there is a 5% chance that the scrying device automatically shuts down once a subject being spied upon detects the scrying. An intelligence score of 16-18 gives a bonus to scrying range and time (as listed in Tables 4 and 7). The scrying device also communicates as follows (roll 1d6): 1-4, speech; 5, visual images; or 6, telepathy within 60'. If the device speaks, the DM should determine which language it speaks (Common, Elven, etc.).

Memory: This feature gives the scrying device 2-24 memory slots for storing one image in each slot (person, place, or thing) that can be found in one segment by scrying if in range.

Precognition: This ability allows the scryer to see into the near future. This viewing, however, exhausts the scryer so that viewing time is lost. For every hour into the future that the scryer views, five rounds of viewing time are lost. For example, a 6th-level magic-user with an intelligence of 16 would have 42 rounds of scrying time per session (using Tables 5 and 7). He could see eight hours into the future, but for only two rounds, using such a device.

This ability must be limited at the DM's discretion. Precognition of any sort does not mean that an event viewed will come to pass—it is merely one of the most probable outcomes of that particular timeline. The DM may feel free to restrict this ability as befits his personal campaign.

Range extension: Roll 1d6 for results: 1-3, 50 miles are added to the scrying range; 4-6, 100 miles; 7, 150 miles; and 8, 200 miles.

Scrylink: This power allows two scryers to communicate telepathically with each other through their own scrying devices. Only one device need have the scrylink power. Once this power is evoked and another scrying device is selected for communication, the contacted device glows with a soft light until it is "answered" by its user. Scrylink contact is in addition to any other use of that scrying device, and scrylink contact may be made up to three times per day. The amount of time spent waiting for the other device to be answered counts against the time spent communicating for that period.

Warding: This feature allows the scryer to attune the device to him alone. Anyone else attempting to touch or use the scrying device must save vs. death magic at —1 per three levels of the owner or take 5 hp damage per the owner's level and become comatose for a number of days equal to 4-24 plus the owner's level. A successful saving throw means all damage and effects are reduced by half. Only *limited wish, wish,* or *alter reality* negate the coma. A successful *dispel magic* spell unlocks the ward so a new owner can use the device. It takes 30 days minus the new owner's level to align the ward. During this time, the new owner must be in continual physical contact with the device. Multiclassed PCs or NPCs use the most powerful spell-using level available to them to determine how long it takes to align the ward.

Spells from afar

Certain scrying devices let the user cast spells through them at the area or person being viewed, if the DM so allows. Such

Table 8

Revised Subject-Location Chances

Scryer's knowledge of subject	Location chance
Subject is personally well known to scryer	75%
Scryer is well informed of subject	35%
Subject is personally known slightly to scryer	20%
Scryer is slightly informed of subject	10%
Positive modifications	
Subject is in a deserted area	+ 40%
Part of subject itself is in scryer's possession	+ 35%
Subject is shown in a picture	+ 20%
Subject's garment or item owned by subject is in scryer's possession	+ 20%
Bonus per level of the scryer	+ 4%
Wish is used	+ 70%
Limited wish/alter reality is used	+ 35%
Negative modifications	
Subject is on an Outer plane	– 50%
Subject is underground or inside a monster	– 45%
Subject is *imprisoned* (as per *imprisonment* spell)	–45%
Subject is *feebleminded* or insane	–40%
Subject is magically altered (*polymorphed, petrified,* etc.)	– 35%
Subject is on an Inner plane	– 25%
Subject is hiding in a large city	– 20%
Subject is hiding in a small city	–10%

Table 9

Scrying Devices: Number of Special Features

Die roll	Features
01-65	0
66-75	1
76-85	2
86-95	3
96-99	4
00	5

* 10% chance to roll again.

Table 10

Scrying Devices: Special Features

Die roll	Special features *	Notes
01-05	*Animal telepathy*	As per psionic ability (1st Edition *Players Handbook,* page 111)
06-15	*Clairaudience*	In effect whenever scrying device is used
16	Deflection	See "Special features" section
17-28	*ESP*	User can *levitate* on command, but must be in contact with device
29-30	Command voice	Projects amplified voice into area scryed; can project *scare* once per day
31	Intelligence	See "Special features" section
32-42	*Levitation*	On command (mental or verbal); user must be in contact with device
43-53	Locate subject	Add 50% to location chances
54	Memory	See "Special features" section
55-64	Minute seeing	As per *eyes of minute seeing*
65	Precognition	See "Special features" section
66	Range extension	See "Special features" section
67	Scrylink	See "Special features" section
68-77	*Shape change*	Scrying device can change into any other inanimate item of same approximate size and weight on user's command
78	*Telepathy*	Allows scryer to communicate with one subject per session
79	Viewing-time bonus	Roll 1d6: 1-2, 10 extra rounds per sitting; 3-4, 15 rounds; 5, 20 rounds; and 6, 25 rounds
80-89	Warding	See "Special features" section
90-99	X-ray vision	As per *ring of X-ray vision*
00	Choose or roll two more times	

* Magical effects are at the 12th level of ability where relevant.

devices have double the gold-piece and experience-point values normally listed for them, and they are very rare. Any spell that does not require the caster to touch the subject or area of effect can be cast through these devices. Only the scryer may cast spells through such devices; onlookers cannot.

When the spell-caster casts a spell through such a scrying zone, his total viewing time is reduced as a result of the stress of the spell-casting. The higher the level of the spell or spell-like power, the greater the exhaustion from the casting and the less time left for viewing afterward. The formula used to calculate the round cost is as follows: the spell's level is multiplied by six; six more is added, and any bonus from Table 7 for high prime attributes is then added. (Cantrips may be cast through such devices at a cost of six rounds per cantrip.)

The casting time for the spell does not change. The spell-caster must have enough viewing time to allow for both the spell's casting and for the viewing-time lost as a result. If the spell-caster attempts to cast a spell through a scrying device but does not have enough viewing time to allow for such casting, the spell is cast but is centered on the scrying device and the area around it—not on the area being scryed. The spell-caster thus becomes the subject of his own (possibly destructive) spells, causing the scryer to make his saving throws against such spells at –4. If the spell is an area-effect spell, everyone in the area must make a saving throw at normal chances (except the scryer, who must still save at –4).

For example, Whitefox, an elven 6th-level magic-user with an intelligence of 16, wants to fry some gnolls she sees through her special *crystal ball.* Using Tables 5 and 7, she has 42 rounds of scrying time in which to do so (her level is multiplied by six, and six more is added for her intelligence bonus). Since a *fireball* spell "costs" 25 viewing rounds, Whitefox is able to perform the desired action within her allotted 42 rounds of scrying time. Assuming she viewed the gnolls for three rounds to begin with, then spent one round casting the spell and recovering from the spell casting, she has 13 rounds left to view the results of her handiwork.

When a spell is cast through a scrying device at a subject, the spell's effect is reduced and saving throws for the victims are made at +4. Victims gain normal saving throws against spells that normally

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Table 11

Crystal Balls: Composition and Powers

1d100	Composition	Color	Possible powers
01-05	Amber	Gold	Grants user immunity to all diseases
06-80	Crystal	Clear	No special powers
81-84	Chrysoberyl	Yellow-green	Grants user protection from magical or psionic possession
85-86	Emerald	Bright green	Viewer can use true sight once a day for one turn
87-88	Jacinth	Fiery orange	Grants user immunity to fire
89	Moonstone	Luminescent blue-white	Grants user commune once per month; also grants twice the usual range during a full moon (for good characters only)
90-91	Peridot	Olive-green	Deflection (see "Special features" section)
92-93	Ruby	Clear red	Saving throws at + 2 while using device
94-95	Sapphire	Clear blue	Add 1 round per scryer's level for scrying duration
96	Sapphire	Black	Commune once a month at twice the range with a greater demon or devil (evil characters only)
97-98	Star sapphire	Blue with star	Magic resistance of 50% while in contact with *crystal ball*
99	Tourmaline	Pale pink	Grants user charisma of 18 while using device
00	Timestar	Swirling clouds with blue star	Can view past or future*

* Timestar is a gemstone possessed only by time elementals. This ability must be limited at the DM's discretion.

do not allow saving throws (e.g., ***magic missile*** or ***slow***), and successful saves mean those spells have no effect.

If a DM anticipates that players will abuse the use of such items, the items may either be excluded from play or else limited in some manner. Greater powers may develop an interest in those who enjoy attacking enemies in this fashion, or the device-user might be attacked in turn by another device-user whose allies were attacked by the first device-user.

Other considerations

The subject of a scryer has the usual chances to detect the scrying, as given in the 1st Edition *DMG* on page 141. The subject can also cast a ***detect magic*** spell to detect such scrying, which will reveal the local viewing point from which the scyer is spying upon the subject. The viewing point will appear in the same shape as the scrying device (a ball for a ***crystal ball,*** a large rectangle for a magic mirror, etc.). The subject may cast ***dispel magic*** upon the viewing point or the area around it, immediately causing the scrying device to cease functioning for one day per level of the subject. The subject cannot otherwise attack the device-user. Ω

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Spelling It Out

A comprehensive guide to writing and keeping spells

by Douglas J. Behringer

So, how exactly do you write down a spell?

This article incorporates all the official information on the subject of spell inscription found in the AD&D® 1st Edition *Players Handbook, Dungeon Masters Guide,* and *Unearthed Arcana.* This article is not intended to be a variant of the official rules; it is intended to expand, clarify, and develop what has already been written within the framework of the rules. Any exceptions to this framework are clearly noted. *[Notes on how the 2nd Edition game accounts for spell inscription are also included.)*

Before discussing the process of scroll inscription, we must first gain an understanding of spell inscription at every level. There are three levels of spell inscription that a magic-user can use:

1. The magic-user can take a spell that he both understands and has memorized, and he can write that spell into his spell book;

2. The magic-user can take a spell that he does not understand and is unable to cast for lack of understanding (e.g., a spell of a level higher than the spell-caster can cast), and he can place that spell in his spell book *[this is not allowed in the 2nd Edition game];* and

3. The magic-user can take a spell he both understands and has memorized, and he can write it down on a scroll.

Each case is treated in detail in the following sections.

Recording understood spells

A magic-user finds a scroll with a spell on it, or else he finds another magic-user's spell book. How does he transfer a new spell from this source into his own personal spell book? To begin with, the magic-user selects a new spell, then must cast a ***read magic*** spell, as that spell is needed to read magical writing written by Now the magic-user must roll an intelligence check (1st Edition *Players*

Handbook, page 10, Intelligence Table II, "Chance to Know Each Listed Spell") to see if he is able to know and understand the spell. (Remember that a PC is only able to know a limited number of spells of each level if his intelligence is below 19.) If the magic-user fails his chance to know the spell or has already reached the maximum number of spells he can know at that level, proceed to the section on "Recording unknown spells."

Assume that the magic-user made his intelligence check and has not yet reached the maximum number of spells he may know at the level in question. He has also used his read *magic* spell, and he has read and understood the spell he picked; he is now ready to record the spell into his own book. To write the spell, the magic-user needs an unused quill and an unopened bottle of ink. The ink costs 100 gp per spell level of the spell being inscribed ***(Unearthed Arcana,*** page 79). A spell takes one turn per spell level to inscribe into the magic-user's spell book. The magic-user gathers his materials, sits down, and eventually has a new spell in his book. *(In the 2nd Edition game, it takes 1-2 days per spell level to inscribe a new spell into a spell book.)*

Recording unknown spells

What if the magic-user was not able to read or understand the new spell due to lack of intelligence or experience levels? To place this type of spell into his spell book, the magic-user must use the first-level spell, *write* (1st Edition *Players Handbook,* page 69). Most magic-users use the *write* spell to record unknowable spells into their spell books, saving these spells for later investigation when the magic-users increase in levels or intelligence. Details on the process of using a ***write*** spell are given with the spell itself.

On page 45 of the 1st Edition *DMG,* the cost of the bottle of ink for the ***write*** spell is listed as 200-500 gp; this ink is sufficient to inscribe 2-4 spells. An optional rule here is to make the cost of writing down an unknown spell (including ink and all) 100 gp per level of the spell to be entered into the spell book. This makes the ***write*** spell compatible with the section on spell books in ***Unearthed Arcana*** (page 79).

Scroll inscription

Finally, we deal with the process by which spells are placed upon scrolls. Most details on scroll inscription are given in the 1st Edition ***DMG,*** page 117.

An unused quill is needed to write a spell onto a scroll. The quill must be from some feathered creature of a magical nature, such as a griffon, roc, harpy, sphinx, pegasus, hippogriff, kenku, or diakk. These quills cost 25-100 gp or more depending upon local availability. Ink is also required; the magic-user must either buy the ink premade (if it is available) or find the formula of ingredients and the process to produce the ink himself. Each spell has its own ink formula. DMs should feel free to invent their own list of ingredients and the process by which the ink is produced (use your imagination, and see the 1st Edition ***DMG,*** page 117, for an example). The ink should cost 4-40 gp per spell level to manufacture and 2-200 gp per spell level to purchase premade. To manufacture the ink, the magic-user needs the assistance of an alchemist, who must also be paid for his help. *[The 2nd Edition game does not give prices for these required items; PCs must get them personally or hire someone to get them. Also, alchemists are not required for the making of spell ink, as mages can create the ink themselves.]*

Inscription Surfaces Table

Surface	**Amount**	**Modifications to chance of spell failure**
Papyrus	2-4 gp/per sheet	+5% to chance of spell failure
Parchment	4-10 gp/per sheet	Normal chance of spell failure
Vellum	8-50 gp/per sheet	−5% to chance of spell failure

To begin, the magic-user must have all the materials necessary for scroll-making at hand: ink, quill, the material components of the spell to be inscribed, and the scroll itself. The magic-user must select the type of surface upon which the spell is to be transcribed (see the Inscription Surfaces Table).

With all the necessary materials at hand, the magic-user can prepare for spell transcription. The preparation period costs 100 gp per spell level and lasts one day per spell level. This period is spent in meditation, fasting, drawing magical runes and symbols, readying the ink, etc. When the preparation period ends, the magic-user is now ready to cast the spell and transcribe it from his spell book and memory onto the scroll. This process takes one hour per spell level. During the spell's transcription period, the magic-user enters a trancelike state. Any interruption of his concentration automatically results in the failure of the transcription. To determine if the scroll inscription is successful (provided no interruptions are experienced), see the section on scroll-inscription failure on page 117 of the 1st Edition ***DMG.***

Additional notes

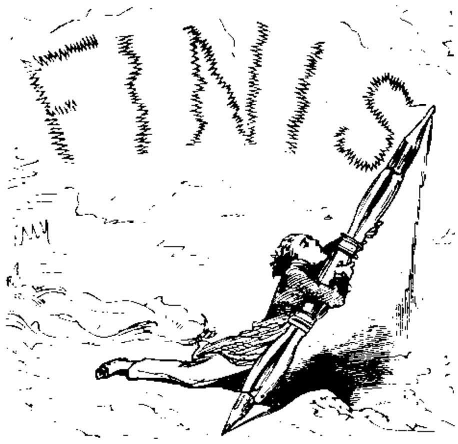
The formula for the ink needed to transcribe a spell into a book or scroll is written in the language of magic—a series of magical runes and symbols. As such, a magic-user needs a ***read magic*** spell to read the formulas written by other magic-users. A magic-user lower than the 7th level of experience needs a ***write*** spell to copy down the ink formula, as if he were copying down an unknown spell. At and above 7th level, a magic-user can copy ink formulas as if they were spells that he understood.

Unearthed Arcana lists a section on spell books that opens up a whole new can of worms. On page 80, under the section entitled "Casting spells directly from books," the rules state: "In extremis, the DM may allow a magic-user to cast a spell directly from any sort of spell book just as if the book were a scroll." Any enterprising player will notice that it is easier, quicker, and cheaper to make a new page in a spell book than it is to create a scroll. Abiding by this short cut, it would not be long before magic-users ran around with several spell books they have made for use as scrolls. *[This form of spell-casting is not allowed in the 2nd Edition game.]*

DMs should be prepared for this twisting of rules in their own campaigns. Some suggested ways to limit players from overusing their PCs' spell books are:

1. Tell the players that their PCs can each have or carry only one spell book at a time (maybe spell books erase each other if brought into close contact);
2. Tell the players that their PCs can't cast spells directly from their spell books *[essentially following the 2nd Edition ban on this form of spell-casting];*
3. Make it more expensive for the PCs to create spell books; or
4. Increase the chance that casting a spell from a spell book will erase other spells found within the book or will destroy the whole book itself.

This article can also be used by illusionists to inscribe their scrolls. Placing unknown spells into a spell book would involve the creation of a spell similar in all regards to the magic-user spell ***write*** (we'll call this new spell ***write illusionist script).*** The details on copying illusionist spells are easily figured out by the DM.



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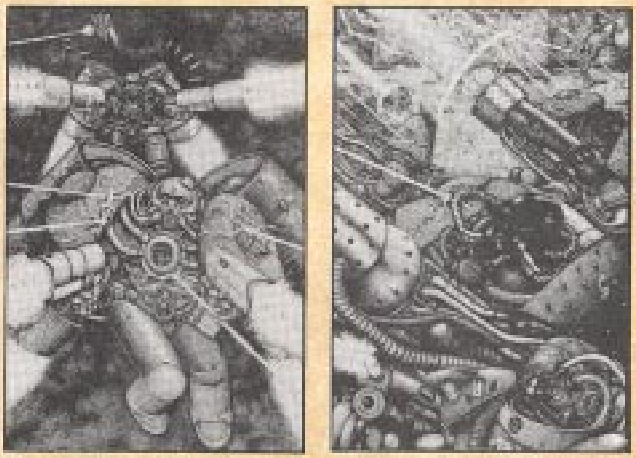

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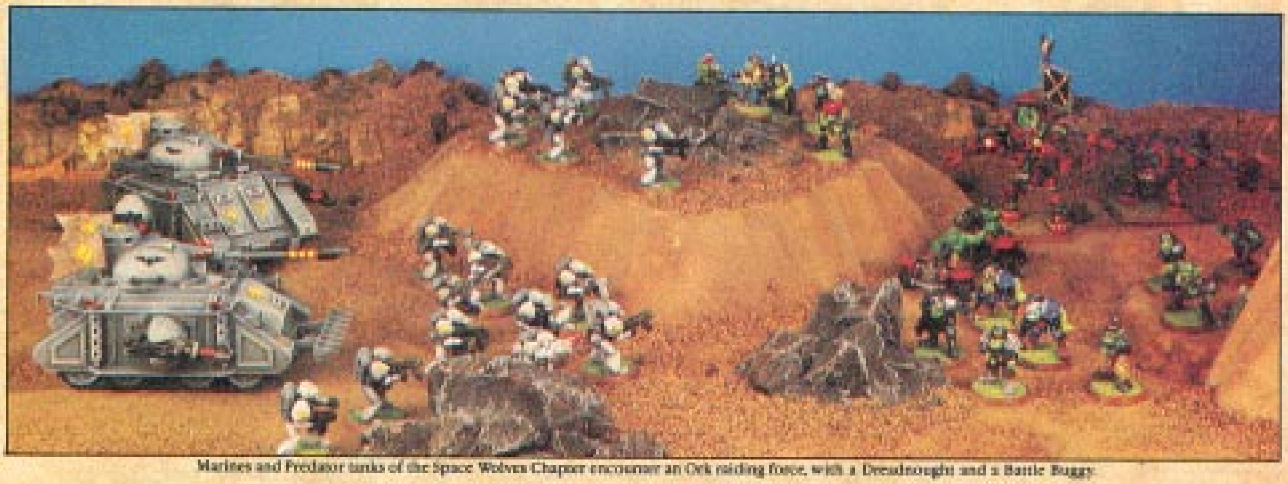

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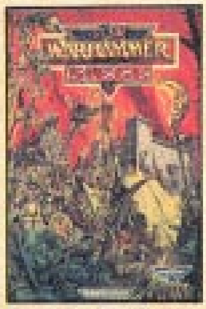

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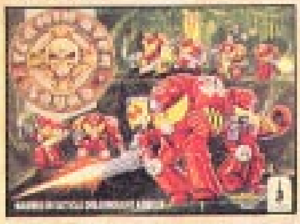

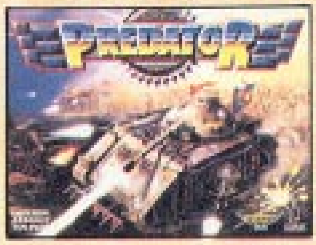

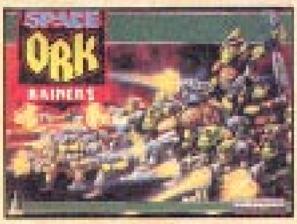

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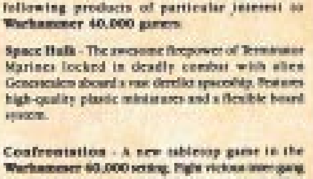

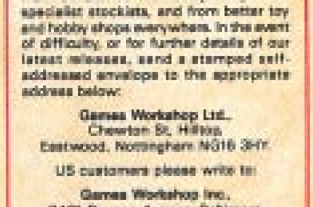

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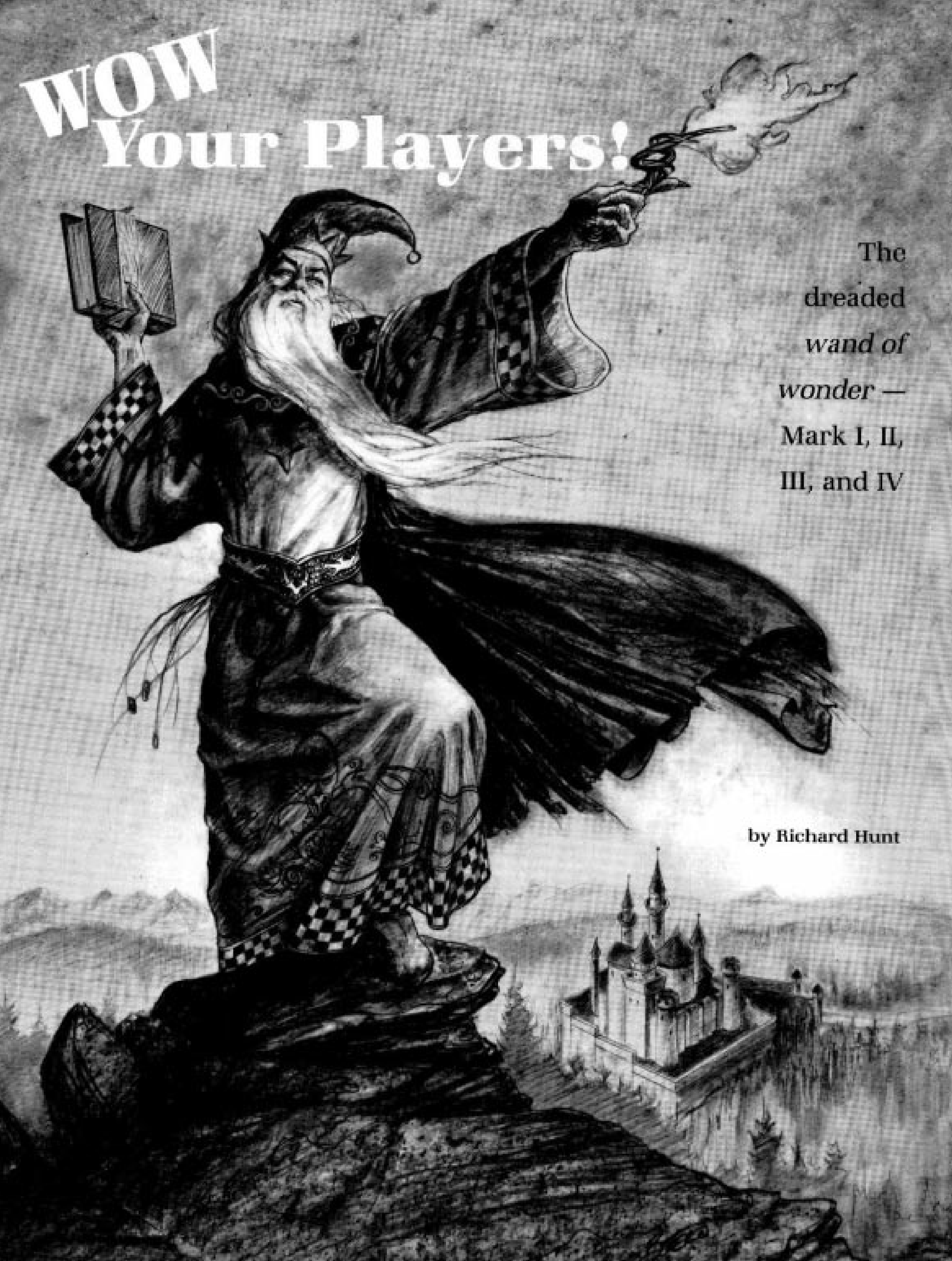
WOW Your Players!

The dreaded *wand of wonder* — Mark I, II, III, and IV

by Richard Hunt



Every time one of the players in my campaign yells out that he is going to "WOW 'em" (WOW being our favorite acronym for the wand ***of wonder),*** I groan at the monotony of running its effects. The players and I have seen all of the powers of that wand at least a hundred times. In the past, I allowed the players to roll the dice when determining the wand's effects, so the players have a good idea about which dice rolls produce which results. The ***wand of wonder*** is thus old and overused.

The guidelines for the ***wand of wonder*** (Dungeon Masters ***Guide,*** page 136) state that the DM may see fit to change the wand's effects. This has been done herein for three new ***wands of wonder.*** It should be noted that all of these wands' spell-like effects are at the 6th level of magic use (as stated in the *DMG,* page 135), with regard to damage, range, duration, area of effect, etc., as applicable. Measurements given in inches refer to scale inches (1" = 10′ indoors or 30′ outdoors). Saving throws are applicable for the spell effects in question or as stated in each wand's effects. Most effects should be removable with a ***dispel magic*** spell, cast against the 6th level of use, unless otherwise noted. Special game effects should be determined by the DM (e.g., heavy rain might make some surfaces very slick, wash away small items, and ruin books and papers). ***Summoned*** creatures disappear if slain, and ***summoning*** effects otherwise conform to the ***monster summoning*** spell of the level appropriate to the type of creature produced. Nonliving items that are produced are permanent and cannot be dispelled.

These wands use only one charge per usage, and they can never be recharged. It is highly recommended that the DM roll all of each wand's effects in order to keep the nature of the roll-up tables a secret; the number of charges in each wand should also be kept secret so players do not overuse them (this is true of any rod, staff, or wand).

The DM may determine which type of ***wand of wonder*** a player character has in his possession by rolling 1d4 (on a roll of 1, the wand is number "I," etc.). All of these tables may be used for a single wand if so desired by first rolling 1d4 for the wand number and 1d100 for that wand's effects. The original wand is reprinted below (with a few additions) for quick comparison and is referred to as the ***wand of wonder I.***

Note that, in the hands of a leprechaun (see wand IV, effect 85-87), a ***wand of wonder*** is very dangerous, as he is able to create any effect he so wishes upon command. This is also said to be true of jesters (see the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, Vol. IV).

Wand of wonder I

01-10: The creature pointed at is ***slowed*** for 1 turn.

11-18: The wielder is deluded for 1 round, as per a potion of ***delusion,*** into believing the wand functions as indicated by a second die roll.

19-25: The wand creates a double-force *gust of wind.*

26-30: The wand creates a ***stinking cloud*** at 3″ range.

31-33: Heavy rain falls for 1 round in a 6″ radius of the wand wielder.

34-36: The wand summons a rhino (AC 6; MV 12″; HD 8 or 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or 2-12; SA charging, trampling; AL N) (01-25); elephant (AC 6; MV 12″ or 15″; HD 10 or 11; #AT 5; Dmg 2-12/2-12/2-12/2-12/2-12 or 2-16/2-16/2-12/2-12/2-12; AL N) (26-50); or large mouse (AC 7; MV 15″; HD ½; hp 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1; AL N) (51-100).

37-46: The wand fires a lightning bolt ***(7" X 1/2')*** as per a ***wand of lightning.***

47-49: A stream of 600 large butterflies pour forth and flutter around for 2 rounds, blinding everyone (including the wielder); they then disappear.

50-53: The target, if within 6″ of the wand, is ***enlarged.***

54-58: ***Darkness*** is cast in a 3″-diameter hemisphere at 3″ distance from the wand.

59-62: Grass grows in an area of 16" square before the wand, or grass existing there grows to 10 times its normal size.

63-65: *Vanish* is cast upon any nonliving object of up to 1,000 lbs. mass and up to 30 cubic feet in size (the object becomes ethereal).

66-69: The wand wielder is ***diminished*** to one-twelfth his normal height, as per a potion of ***diminution.***

70-79: A ***fireball*** is cast, as per a ***wand of fireballs.***

80-84: ***Invisibility*** covers the wand wielder.

85-87: Leaves grow from the target if it is within 6" of the wand.

88-90: 10-40 gems of 1-gp base value shoot forth in a 3″ -long stream, causing 1 hp damage each to any creature in their path. Roll 5d4 for the number of hits on the target. Gems that miss go on to strike the being immediately behind the target, with hits determined as above, until all gems hit or the spell's range is reached.

91-97: Shimmering colors dance and play over a 4″ X 3″ area in front of the wand; creatures therein are blinded for l-6 rounds.

98-00: ***Flesh to stone*** (or the reverse, if the target is stone) is cast on the target, if the target is within 6" of the wand.

—Wand of wonder II—

01-10: The wand shoots forth a ***web*** as per the spell (the wand acts as one anchor point).

11-18: The wand shocks the wielder as per a ***shocking grasp*** spell; the wielder must make a dexterity check on ld20 at -2 to keep holding the wand.

19-25: ***Reverse gravity*** affects the target and all within a 3″ radius (including the caster, if close enough) for 2-5 rounds.

26-30: ***Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*** affects the target creature.

31-33: 800 small rubber balls (each 1 actual inch in diameter) rain down for 1-4 rounds within a 3″ radius of the wielder, causing all in the area to make a dexterity check on ld20 or trip and fall. The balls remain in the area, causing further checks at the start of each round of combat, until they are carried or swept away.

34-36: The wand ***summon;*** a large dove (AC 7; MV 1"/36″ (MC: D); HD ½; #AT 1; Dmg 1; AL N) (01-25); a large rabbit (AC 6; MV 18″; HD ½; #AT 1; Dmg 1; AL N) (26-50); or a large iguana (AC 4; MV 18"//6″; HD 3; #AT 1; Dmg l-4; AL N) (51-00).

37-46: The wand casts ***chain lightning*** at the target.

47-49: The target creature and the wielder are covered in liquid chocolate.

50-53: Haste affects the target.

54-58: The wand casts ***hold monster*** at the target.

59-62: Suds flow from the ground in a 9" radius around the wielder for 2-5 rounds, at 3 cubic feet per round. The suds are either from soap (01-25) or beer (26-00).

63-65: The target creature is ***polymorphed*** as per a ***wand of polymorphing*** into a random creature (01-75; DM selects any random-monster table and rolls thereon) or nonliving item (76-00; DM selects any table from Appendix 1 in the *DMG* and rolls thereon).

66-69: The wand wielder spins clockwise (01-50) or counterclockwise (51-00) for 1-4 rounds and must make a dexterity check on 1d20 in order to move or act each round thereafter for 1-4 rounds.

70-79: The wand heals the wielder for 1-8 hp if he is wounded.

80-84: The wand fires a ***magic missile*** as per a ***wand of magic missiles.***

85-97: The target inflates like a balloon for 1-4 rounds and deflates for another 1-4 rounds; only living material of up to 1,000 lbs. is affected (the object will not float in the air).

88-90: The wand stretches out and bites the target for 2-12 hp damage (treat as 6 + 4 HD creature; maximum range 9″).

91-97: The wand wielder breathes fire as per a randomly determined potion of ***fire breathing*** (only one breath use is allowed).

98-00: The target is ***disintegrated*** as per the spell.

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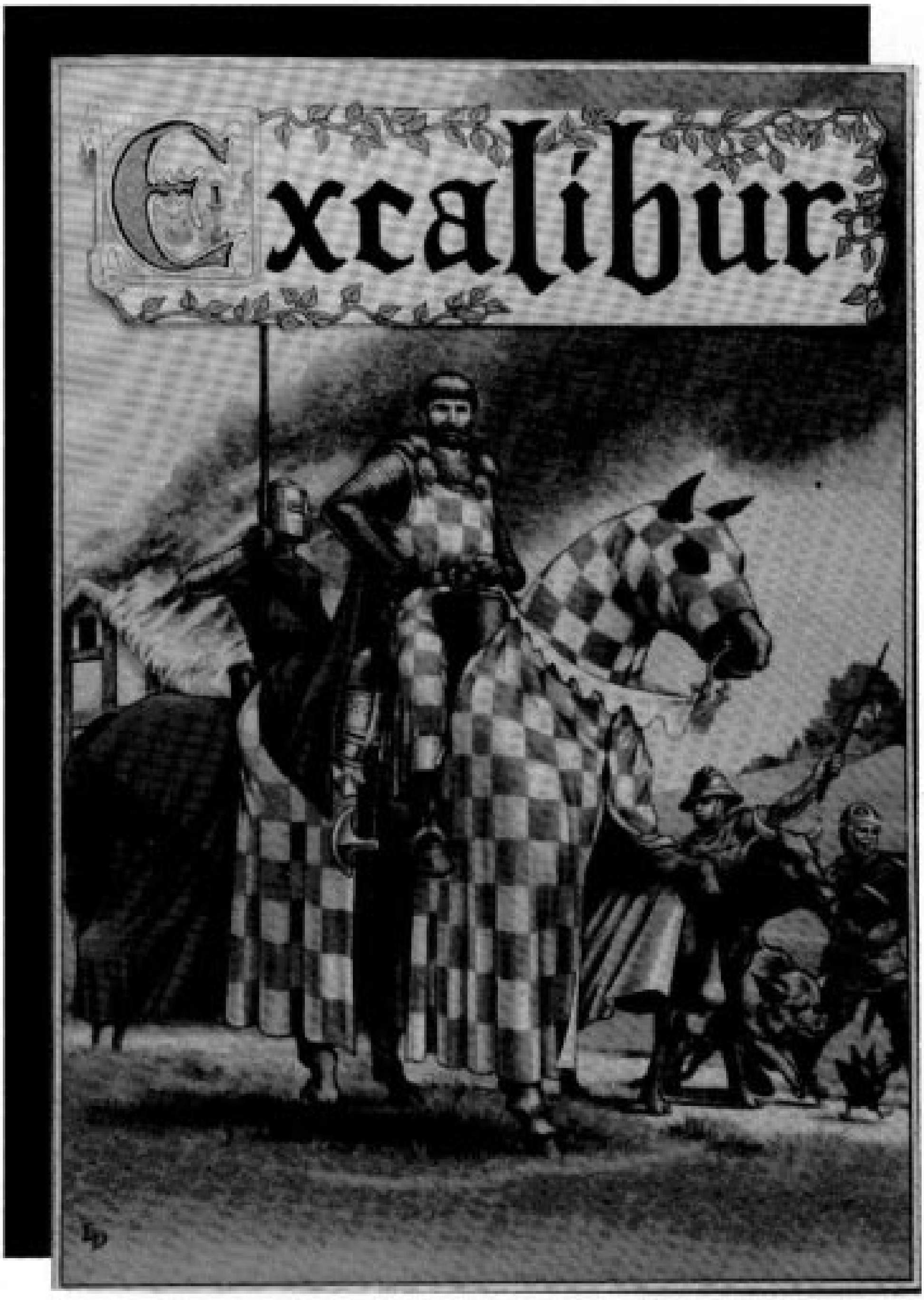
—Wand of wonder III—

01-10: *Scare* is cast at the target.
11-18: The wielder is affected by an irritating rash for 1-4 rounds, reducing his dexterity to 3.
19-25: *Darkness* affects the target every other round for 3-10 rounds.
26-30: Fumble affects the target at double-normal duration.
31-33: The wand begins to gripe about the wielder's treatment of it, loudly complaining about the bad working conditions, the lousy pay, the long working hours, etc. (this effect is similar to that of a *magic mouth;* the wand is not actually sentient).
34-36: The wand *summons* a buzzard (AC 6; MV 3"/27" (MC: E); HD 1 +1; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; AL N) (01-25); giraffe (AC 7; MV 24"; HD 5; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; AL N) (26-50); or large kitten (AC 6; MV 5"; HD ½; hp 1; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1; SA rear claws for 1/1; AL N) (51-00).
37-46: A *delayed blast fireball* takes effect from the point of casting, with a delay time of 5-50 segments.
47-49: The target and wielder are "exchanged" — i.e., the wielder takes the place of the target, and the target takes the place of the wielder, exchanging clothes, equipment, etc., but otherwise retaining their normal physical appearances.
50-53: *Confusion* affects the target.
54-58: *Mirror image* affects the target.
59-62: The target begins to recite very bad poetry for 2-8 rounds, taking no other action unless attacked, as if requested to do so under a *charm* spell.
63-65: A dust devil is *summoned* (AC 4; MV 18"; HD 2; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA/SD see *Unearthed Arcana,* page 34, for details; AL N) and attacks the target as per the *dust devil* spell.
66-69: *Jump* affects the wielder randomly (roll for a random direction, and roll 1d3 for distance (1 = 10', 2 = 20', and 3 = 30'). The wielder can *jump* only 10' backward.
70-79: A *force cage* affects the target.
80-84: The wielder is affected by a *strength* spell.
85-87: The target's weapon becomes a teddy bear (01-25), a leg of mutton (26-50), a ladle (51-75), or a herring (76-00). If the target has no weapon, choose another possession. If the target has no possessions, roll again, ignoring this result.
88-90: The wand spews colorless slime in a cone 3" wide and 6" long, affecting the area as a grease spell.
91-97: *Fear* (01-50) or *faerie fire* (51-00) affects the target.
98-00: An *incendiary cloud* affects the target area.

—Wand of wonder IV—

01-10: A *chromatic orb* affects the target.
11-18: The wielder is affected as if he had imbibed a *philter of stammering & stuttering.*
19-25: The wand creates a *flaming sphere* which affects the target.
26-30: A *ray of enfeeblement* affects the target.
31-33: The wand causes a pillow (01-25), small table (26-75), or anvil (76-00) to appear over the target's head. The pillow causes no damage; the table causes 1-6 hp damage (as a club); and the anvil causes 3-30 hp damage, plus the target must make a constitution check on 1d20 at -4 or be knocked unconscious for 2-12 turns.
34-36: The wand *summons* a ugly painting (01-25), bellows (26-50), or a storm giant's boot (51-00).
37-46: The wand affects the target as per a *ring of the ram* (3 charges expended at once).
47-49: The wand fires 2-6 cream puffs at the target, doing no damage.
50-53: The target is imbued with *improved invisibility*
54-58: *Fascinate* affects the target, who focuses on the wielder.
59-62: The wand causes the target's nose to grow 10 times its normal size for 2-6 rounds.
63-65: The target is affected as if a potion of *gaseous form* was imbibed.
66-69: The wielder *levitates* uncontrollably, always heading upward until the spell duration is reached (at which point the wielder falls).
70-79: *Evard's black tentacles* takes effect around the the target.
80-84: The wielder is affected by a *stoneskin* spell.
85-87: The wand *summons* a leprechaun (AC 8; MV 15"; HD 1 - 1; hp 2-5; #AT nil; SA/SD spells, theft, 80% magic resistance *(see Monster Manual,* page 60); AL N). The DM should play the leprechaun to the hilt, trying to gain control of the wand that summoned him and causing complete chaos for as long as possible.
88-90: A randomly chosen item on the target's person sprouts wings and attacks another enemy target for 2-3 rounds as a 6 +4 HD creature. Only small hand-held objects are so affected, and the DM should decide what the item is and what its combat statistics are *(see the animate object* spell).
91-97: The wand fizzles for 2-4 rounds, then causes a *hypnotic pattern* to appear, affecting all within range who gaze upon it.
98-00: A *cone of cold* affects the target area at double-normal damage. Ω

To the victor...the spoils



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& Wotan.
1988,1989.

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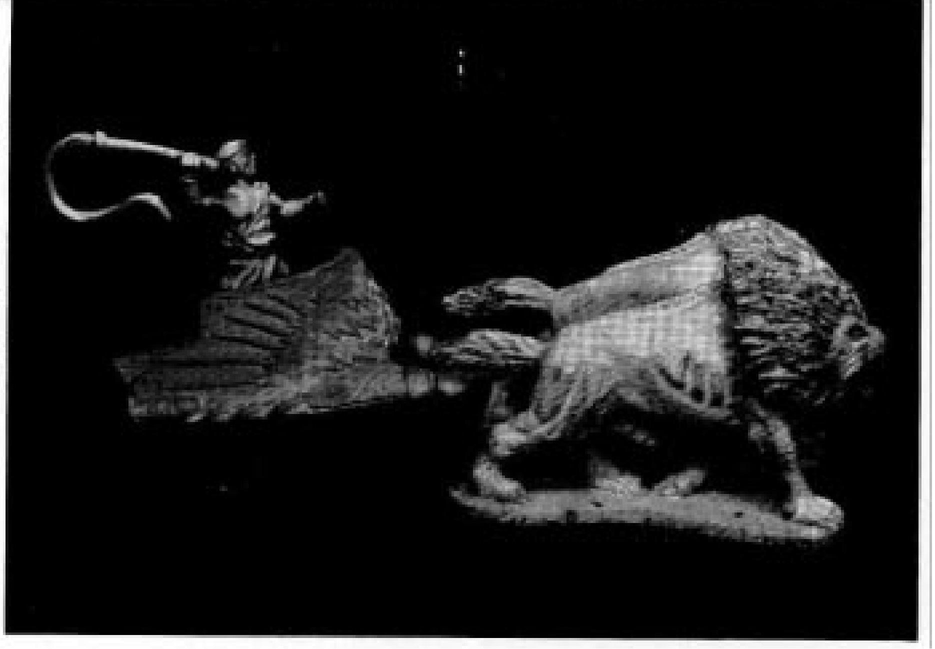


Photographs by Mark Hammegren

Ral Partha's TOG™ Racing Chariot: If you fall off, you get eaten.

Through the Looking Glass

Dragons, heroes, & chariot races

©1989 by Robert Bigelow

This month's review column begins with a quick correction. In DRAGON® issue #144, we reviewed a female-adventurer set from Ral Partha, listing the set as being from FASA's TOG™ universe (product number 02-959). This information is incorrect. The figures are actually from Ral Partha's "All Things Dark and Dangerous" line, sculpted by Julie Guthrie, but were incorrectly shipped to dealers with the TOG™ package headers. If you are interested in purchasing these figures, check both lines before asking your local hobby shop to order them.

I'd also like to request some help from our European readers. I received a hostile letter from a British reader asking if I had something against figures produced in Europe (other than those made by Games Workshop). He pointed out that I have rarely reviewed anything but products from American companies, and asked if I could perhaps slip in one or two European figures.

The problem has been that I have been unable to obtain figures designed and manufactured in Europe. Distributors in the United States have been unable to provide European figures, and I have received no acknowledgement from letters written to companies in Europe.

If you are a European reader and you know of a company that produces any scale miniatures, buildings, or scenery, regardless of whether the genre is military, science fiction, or fantasy, please send me the name and address of the company, along with the name of a contact person (if you know one). Any letter that you write to the company requesting it to help us will be greatly appreciated. By working together, we should be able to establish an international column in which we get the widest representation of the miniatures hobby. (American and Canadian readers can also suggest companies to cover.)

Miniatures sent for review and all other correspondence should be sent to:

Robert Bigelow
1411B Washington Street
Waukegan IL 60085

Reviews

Miniature-figure ratings

*	Poor
* *	Below average
* * *	Average
* * * *	Above average
* * * * *	Excellent

Grenadier Models, Inc.
P.O. Box 305
Springfield, PA 19064

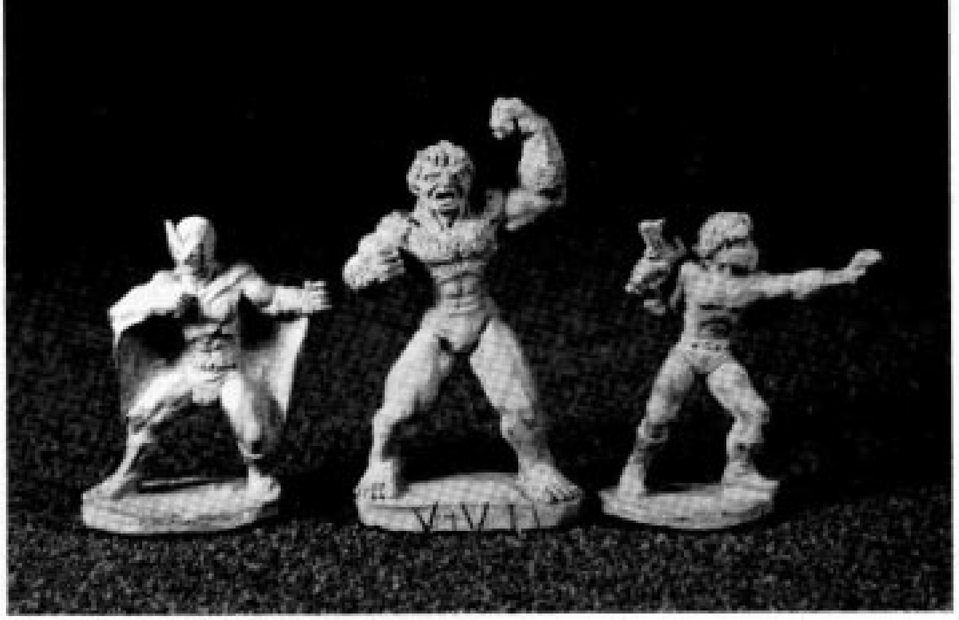
Grenadier Models UK Ltd.
19 Babage Road, Deeside
Clwyd, Wales
United Kingdom CH5 2QB

9601 Black Dragon II ****
(* * * *½ with work)

9602 Red Dragon II * * *½
(* * * * ½ with work)

In 1984, Grenadier Models introduced an original line of dragon miniatures to the gaming public. This was a revolutionary idea involving the release of a different dragon each month for one year. Of the 12 dragons, an equal number were split between good and evil. The dragons were mostly smooth-skinned; several had prominent mold marks, but these were the first dragons to be cast with virtually no assembly required.

Now the line has come almost full circle, having gone through a total of 25 dragons and giants of all types and sizes. In 1988, Grenadier released its second line of dragons. These dragons follow the numbers and release order of their predecessors, but with a world of difference. The two dragons submitted for review differ



Lance & Laser's V&V™ figures: Manta Man, Bull, and Enforcer in the lineup.

tremendously from each other as well as from the first dragon series.

The Black Dragon II is not nearly as imposing a figure as the Red Dragon II. The Black Dragon II is shown taking a swipe at something with its left paw. Its mouth is closed to a slit with its tongue out, and its neck is arched. The figure is braced on three legs. The lack of a sharpened dorsal spine makes the wyrm less imposing, but the pebbled skin and plates protecting both spine and belly seem to make it a hard foe to kill.

As a modeling project, this figure is a dream. The Black Dragon II is a four-piece casting with horns that fit easily onto the head with minimum filling. Likewise, the wings fit neatly into the premolded slots, leaving only crack-filling and trimming the end of each wing. Unfortunately, this dragon also has a mold line running from its chin down to its right front leg. This mold line can be cleaned up with almost no trouble, but precise care is required in order to preserve the models great detail..

The female magic-user included with this kit was the cause of some controversy, being a well-proportioned, three-quarters nude figure. Her state of undress caused two different boxes to be made (the original had the seminude figure printed on the carton, which caused some distributors not to carry the product in order to avoid problems with parents).

The Red Dragon II is a dragon to be reckoned with from both a modeler's and a gamer's point of view. The model is 7¾″ long from snout to tail tip and over 6½″ wide from wing tip to wing tip. In 25mm scale, this measures out to fill 47′ X 39′. The dragon is posed in a crouched, ready-to-spring position. Its paws are flexed, and its claws are out. Its spine is arched, and its mouth is open as it gets ready to bite. A magic-user comes with this kit; his arms are raised as if he is casting a spell or challenging any comers.

The modeler has much to cheer about with this kit. Still, a lot of work is needed to make the model into a high-grade figure. The mage is not overly detailed; what detail it has is shallow and might fill when primed. For example, the mage has a mustache on the carton illustration, but that same mustache is hard to see on the figure.

The red dragon comes in six pieces. Before you start on the dragon, make sure you have filler putty handy. The dragon's skull is the easiest piece to fit, but it needs filling on the sides and back, or else should be hollowed out for a better fit. The mold line runs right up the middle of the chest scales, so it needs to be cut down and filed. Special care will be needed to avoid destroying the models detail, however.

The wings and arms of the dragon are a major problem. The wings join the arms to fill the body socket and form a full unit. This works well in theory, but in practice you need lots of time, filler, and luck to get the limbs to fit. My best advice is to make the arm sockets a bit bigger, then trim both the wing and arm joints to about 85% of their original size. Make sure you keep the rounded ball shape on each arm and the rounded wing end, or the arm will look odd. After you glue on the wings, wait 24 hours before working and filling, or you'll have to start again. You won't need to do anything else to this model; the rest of it is excellent.

I recommend these figures for anyone whose collection lacks dragons, or for the collector who wants a new set of antagonists. With a little work, these figures will be quality pieces. These figures retail for $8.95 each.

Lance & Laser Models, Inc.
P.O. Box 14491
Columbus OH 43214

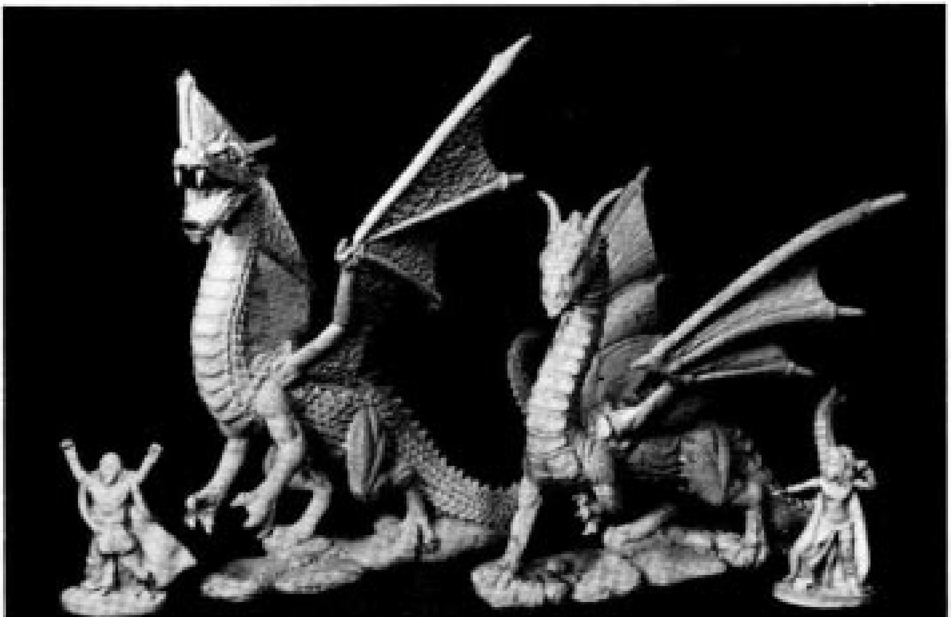
V&V™ 14 Bull	* * * *
V&V™ 15 Shrew	* * * ½
V&V™ 16 Dreamweaver	***
V&V™ 19 Manta Man	***½
V&V™ 17 Enforcer	****

Long before TSR's MARVEL SUPER HEROES® or Mayfair's DC™ HEROES™ games appeared, two superhero games were already on the scene and had large followings: Hero Games' CHAMPIONS™ and Fantasy Games Unlimited's VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ games. A major problem, however, has been finding miniatures to represent original superhero characters. The CHAMPIONS game has had several sets of miniatures produced for it, but the length of time any of those figures have been available has been short. The V&V™ game has not had nearly the same degree of exposure.

But all that has changed. Lance and Laser Models, Inc. has presented a line of miniatures designed for use with V&V™ game. At present, 11 figures are available. We received several figures for review.

All the figures are 25mm scale. No state-

Grenadier's red and Black Dragons: A little work makes perfection.



ment is made on any of them as to whether they are good or evil, which is fine. All of the figures have some kind of costume, and all but Bull wear face masks. With the exception of Bull, all the figures are the same height and all of their muscles look blocky. (Clearly, this is another company that has forgotten that people come in different heights.)

Bull is far and away the best-sculpted figure of the group. The figure stands 25% taller than the rest of the figures in this group and is more muscular than the others. He is dressed in a pair of shorts that almost blend into his back. His face is marked by a snarl, and his muscles are just a little too sharply defined. But what grabs you most is the well-sculpted body hair that gives the character his bull-like appearance.

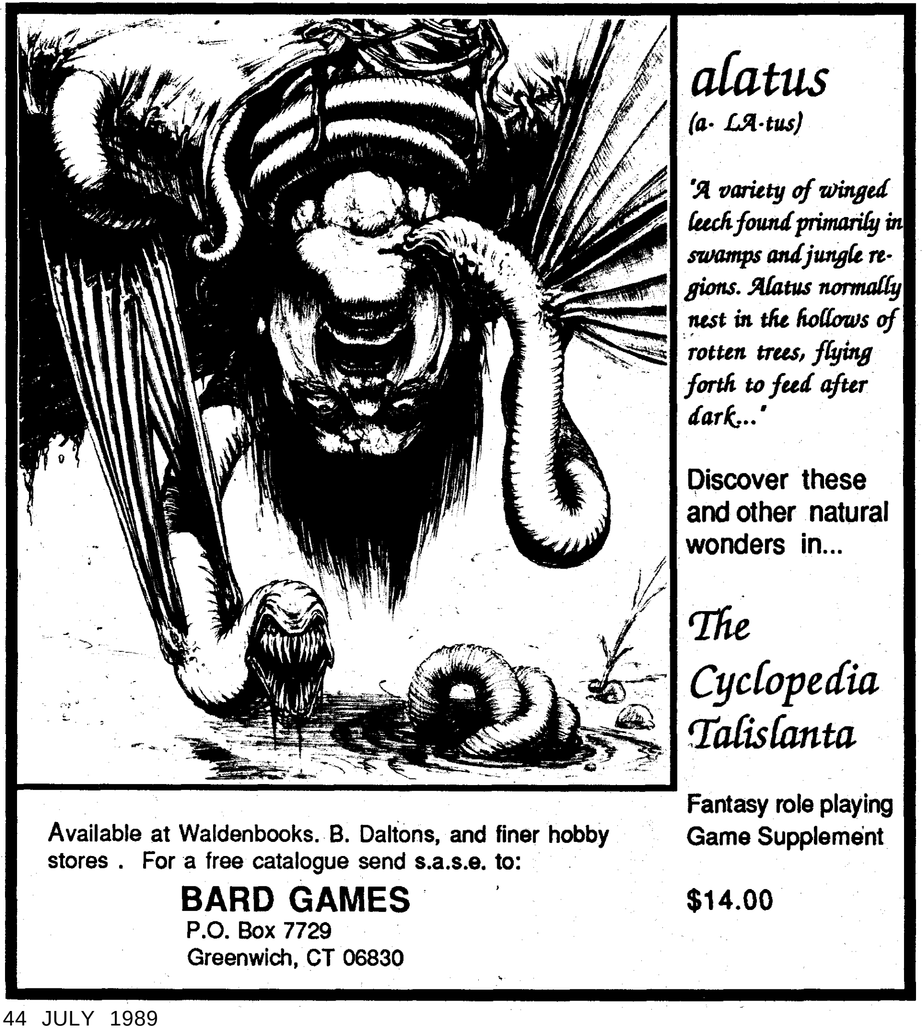
Shrew is a muscular female. The problem is that she is almost too muscular, which gives her illusion of being over-sculpted. Her hair is well done, her figure is slightly exaggerated, and her muscles are smoother than Bull's. Shrew wears a mask and does not appear very happy.

Dreamweaver is almost the antithesis of the other characters, being the same height as the other characters but petite in nature. She shows no major muscles and seems to be too small in comparison with the other figures; she appears to be swimming in her hip boots and full-length gloves. Her belt is well done, but there is some flash on the boot tops and mold line. Her face is either covered by a mask (my first guess) or the sculptor did a poor job on her cheeks and mouth.

Manta Man's costume resembles a large manta ray. The costume's wings stretch from a clasp in front and back to his wrists. At first glance, his mask could be mistaken for Batman's, until you look closely and see that it is shaped in an "M". His boots have front plates that look like slotted triangles. His body is crouched in a fighting stance or a parry move. If you look closely, you'll see a chest emblem.

Last, but not least, is the Enforcer. This figure could almost pass as a robber. The character wears a mask over the lower half of his face. The Enforcer is muscular in appearance, well detailed, and appropriate in all other aspects. He carries an unknown type of weapon, which at first glimpse would suggest a box-shaped machine pistol. This figure is obviously loaded for combat.

These figures are only available through Lance & Laser. They are recommended not only for the V&V™ game but for any other superhero game that allows you to design your own heroes. Though not collectors' items, these models are sturdy figures with potentially wide use. They sell for $1.25 each.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GWS 00261 ADEPTUS TITANICUS game ***½

In the gaming world, combat groups have been refined to great degrees. In FASA's BATTLETECH®, Leading Edge Games' LIVING STEEL™, Palladium's ROBOTECH™, and other games, manlike death machines roam the battlefield. Now the gaming field grows larger with the late entry of the ADEPTUS TITANICUS game by Games Workshop.

The ADEPTUS TITANICUS game is based on the premise that huge, crew-driven, robotic fighting machines provide the major fire support for the armies of both the Imperium and its traitorous enemy. These machines are the supertanks of the future, capable of carrying numerous huge weapons ranging from plasma guns to power fists.

The box contains (among other things) eight blown-foam buildings in 1/300th scale, ranging from seven- to ten-stories in height. The buildings feature recessed windows and doors, and a wide variety of different architectural styles and roofs. Unfortunately, they all share a couple of problems. Because the models are made of foam, they damage easily when exposed to heavy or sharp objects. They also have mold extrusion marks and bumps that mar the details of every building. The marks can be removed, but it takes a lot of time. Remember to use only water-based paints to detail the buildings.

The box also contains data cards, five markers, control cards, blast-radius cards, and a movement and target range finder. The components are all high quality, easy to read, and colorful. A well-done, 60-page, fully illustrated rule book is included; it contains clear step-by-step instructions for the game. The book is done in a slick format and resembles a copy of White Dwarf magazine rather than a regular rule book. These rules are easy to read and understand. They provide histories, painting scenes, tips, and scenarios as well.

Last, but not least, are the Titans themselves. You receive enough parts in the box to build three red and three blue Titans. The Titans must be assembled, and care should be taken in some steps, as the leg base pins seem very vulnerable to breakage. The Titans and their weapons both have some flash, but it is minimal. There are not enough weapons included to outfit six Titans, so plan ahead or don't glue weapons on. The detail quality of the Titans is good, but the Titans are done in plastic, so there is neither as much detail

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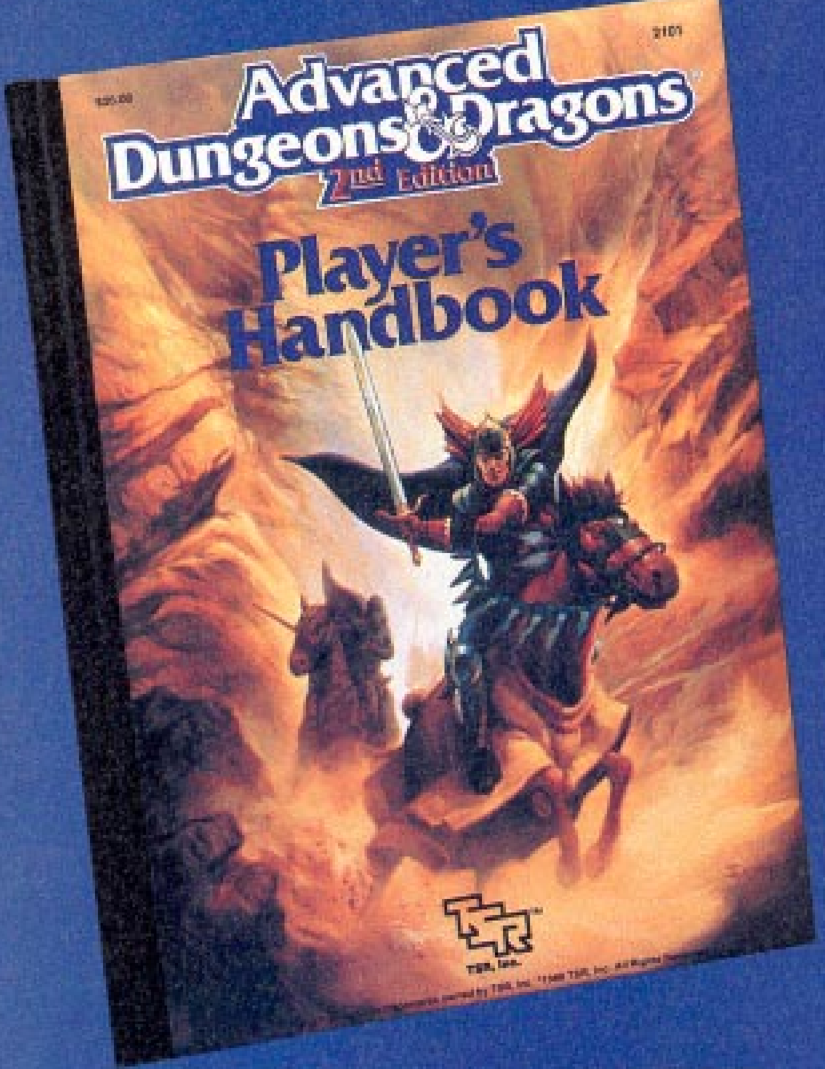
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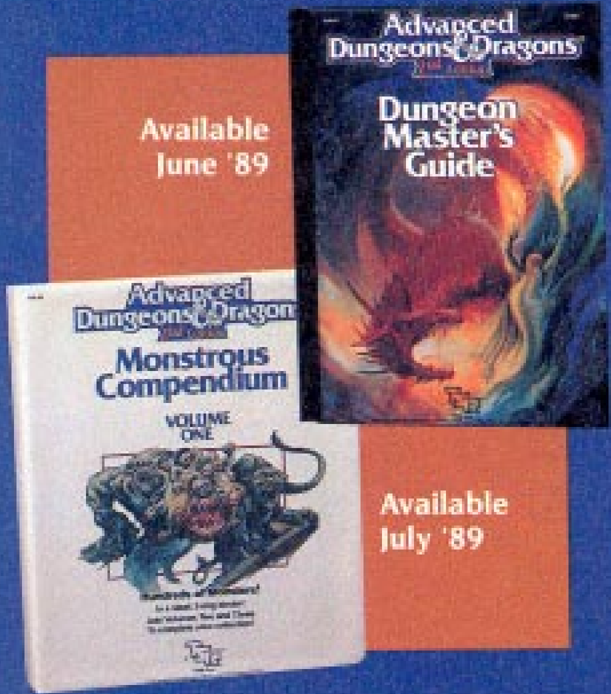
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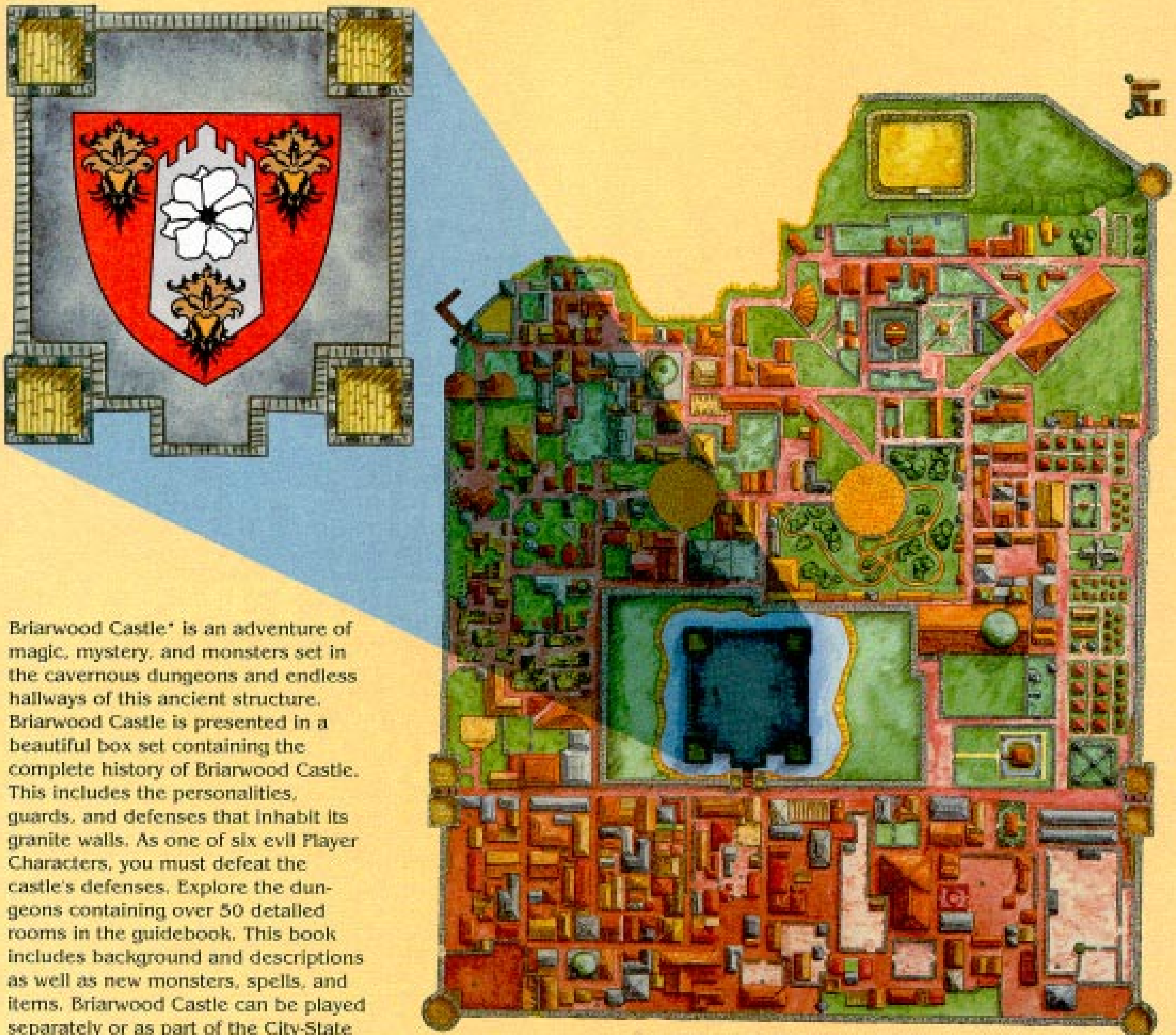
Briarwood Castle



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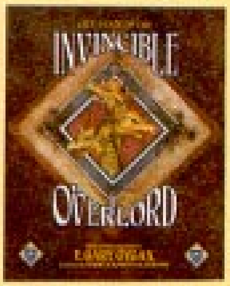

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nor as many different details as there would be on a metal casting. The nice thing about plastic is that you can remove or change weapons as you want; the problem is that the weapons get loose after a period of use. The Titans are about 2½" tall when assembled.

To judge the game, we had a variety of club members play it. The following was produced from their comments. My thanks go out to club member Paul Woods for helping me compile this data.

1. The game is fast and easy to play; the instructions are clear and concise. Those who are novices at miniatures gaming will be able to play after reading the rules and playing a scenario with the rules in hand.
2. Most of the players enjoyed the game. Our crew is slightly bloodthirsty, and several gamers enjoyed being able to dismember robots during play.
3. The group also enjoyed being able to repair damaged Titans while they were still engaged in combat.
4. Speed of movement is not as big an advantage as it should be, and there are no modifier tables for shooting at a target moving at varying speeds (as you'd expect would exist between light and heavy Titans). So why take light?
5. Multilaunchers are ultrapowerful long-range weapons; they should have ammunition limits.
6. Infantry rules are referred to but are not in the set. You must buy *White Dwarf* magazine to get them.

The biggest complaint I have heard so far about the game is its price. Most people (including me) feel this game is dangerously overpriced. I say "dangerously" because most Games Workshop products are in the high-dollar range, even after making allowances for their import status. This game would be well worth $35.00 to $45.00 maximum, but is simply not worth $60.00 (especially with the great number of less-expensive mechanized combat games currently on the market).

Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
5938 Carthage Court
Cincinnati OH 45212

RP 20-652 TOG™ Racing Chariot * * * ½

FASA's RENEGADE LEGION™/TOG™ universe brings the glory of the classical Roman Empire into a space setting, with all the pleasures and hobbies of ancient Rome—especially gladiatorial combat and vicious chariot races. In these futuristic chariot races, savage animals from around the galaxy are harnessed to antigravity sleds. FASA's CIRCUS IMPERIUM™ game provides a three-dimensional arena for playing an SF version of *Ben Hur,* but it only has counters for the fighting chariots. Now, Ral Partha allows you to recreate deadly and dangerous races with miniatures as well.

The racing chariot consists of: two large creatures that look like pug-nosed, weird-shaped lions; a yoke for pulling the chariot; a two-piece chariot body; two fins; a stand; a driver; and a large collection of weapons and shields for the driver.

The "lions" are well done, with gaping mouths, sharp teeth, beefy tongues, ridged spines, and body hair. They are slightly larger in scale than present-day lions and come in two poses. Each lion has a molded box on its right or left shoulder where the yoke attaches.

The chariot is a simple five-part casting. The two guide fins used to steer the chariot are attached to the bottom of the chariot (as is the yoke). The chariot wall is glued to the chariot base. (Given the problems we had, I recommend that you do the bottom detail first, then wait 24 hours before turning the figure over.) The chariot detail consists of the antigravity motors, spines, and the TOG emblem (amidst lightning bolts on the front of the chariot). The chariot's floor and walls have no interior detail.

The chariot driver is a slave dressed in a tunic. There is almost nothing distinguishing about him except his look of concentration. His back arm is raised and a whip from the extra weapons fits neatly in his hand. You might want to trim the driver's base slightly for placement in the chariot, but have another base handy to show him fighting outside the chariot.

The real catch to this set is the choice of weapons provided. Included are a trident, whip, swords, mace, grappler, and two shields. These can be used as arena rubble, equipment for other fighters, or spare parts.

All in all, this is a good kit, but one that has absolutely nothing to make you want to give up seeing your girlfriend in place of buying and working on this model. Unfortunately, at $10 per chariot set (and you need a minimum of two to play the game), you're going to have to give up something.

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MAGUS!

The game of magical power and conquest

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MAGUS! is a game of light-hearted acquisition and conquest for 2-6 players. Each player represents a powerful wizard—a Magus—and attempts to acquire various Power Zones represented on the game board. By skillful use of his acquisitions and cards, each player then attempts to gain control of the Towers of all other players, or else gain all Power Zones on the game board.

The Magus! game includes the following components:

1 game board;
6 Magus markers;
20 Stars cards;
20 Omens cards;
32 Alliance cards;
90 acquisitions titles (Gold, Gems, and Spells);
120 colored chits; and
12 randomizer chits; in case you do not have two six-sided dice (2d6).

The cards, markers, titles, and chits are printed on the heavy paper stock in the center of this magazine. Carefully cut them out with scissors and sort them out. These may be stored in plastic bags for safekeeping.

If dice are not available, the randomizer chits included with this game may be used. Place the chits in a opaque, sealed container, then draw two chits at a time to simulate a 2d6 roll, placing the chits in the container again after each draw.

Preparation and Starting

Set the game board upon a playing surface. Note that the game board consists of three different kinds of paths. The **outside track** consists of the 42 squares around the outermost edge of the game board. The **inside track** consists of the 10 squares surrounding the Abyss squares in the center of the game board. There are also six **pathways** connecting the outer and inner tracks.

Each player then receives a Magus marker, which is placed upon its matching-color Tower square. This is the starting space for each player. The choice of which Magus each player may use is somewhat limited, depending on how many players are involved in the game.

Two-player game: Players must choose one of three starting scenarios

Blue Magus vs. Red Magus;
Yellow Magus vs. Purple Magus; or
Green Magus vs. Black Magus

Preparation and starting proceed as normal, except that each player receives two randomly drawn Alliance cards. Players may not start with a natural meld (see "Conducting Attacks"); return all cards that form a meld of this sort and pick again. If players wish to get into the fighting earlier, they may pick as many as five Alliance cards each, none of these may be natural melds.

Three-player game: Players must choose one of two starting scenarios:

Purple Magus vs. Green Magus vs. Red Magus; or
Black Magus vs. Blue Magus vs. Yellow Magus.

No other special rules are required.

Four-player game: The Blue, Red, Yellow, and Purple Magi must be used. No other special rules are required.

Five-player game: The Black and Green Magi must be used. The other three

Magi are chosen from those remaining.

Six-player game: All Magi are used.

Once each player has a Magus, one player is selected to become the **Banker.** This player must sort out the Alliance, Stars, and Omens cards. The Banker then keeps track of the Alliance cards and the acquisitions (Gold, Gem, and Spell tiles) with which Alliance cards are purchased. The Star and Omen cards are divided, shuffled, and placed face down beside the game board. The Banker cannot mix his own Alliance cards or acquisitions with those he monitors in the "Bank."

Lastly, each player receives three Gold, two Gem, and one Spell tiles.

The acquisitions tiles with the numbers "2" and "5" are worth those amounts of Gold, Gems, or Spells, as appropriate. These are not handed out randomly to players, but are kept by the Banker at the start of the game. If a player wishes, he may exchange some of his tiles for the higher-value tiles (like trading five one-dollar bills for a five-dollar bill), but Gold may only be traded for Gold tiles, Gems for Gem tiles, etc. The gaining of higher-value tiles is allowed for a player only during his turn; such tiles may be broken down into smaller units at any time to pay debts to the Banker or to other players.

Each player then rolls two dice. The player with the highest total moves first, followed by the players after him in clockwise order. Ties are resolved by having everyone reroll.

Movement

Movement in the MAGUS! game is unique among board games. Each turn, before rolling two dice for his **movement score,** each player must announce whether he intends to use his lowest die roll, highest die roll, or the total score of both dice rolled as his movement score for that turn. The player must also announce a **movement plan,** telling where he will go if his movement score carries him through one or more intersections. The movement plan must follow the normal rules for movement given herein. If a player fails to announce a movement plan before rolling the dice, a die is rolled at each intersection to determine where the Magus goes (odd = left, even = right).

Movement around the outside track is made in a clockwise direction. Thus, the Yellow Magus enters the board at the "Alchemist" square and proceeds around the outside track of the board toward the "Yellow Stronghold, Gain 2 Gold" square.

Movement along the pathways between the outside and inside tracks is two-way; players may move their markers in either direction to go from one track to another. However, once a Magus is moved in a certain direction along a path, it must continue moving in that same direction until it leaves the pathway; if its movement ends on a square on the pathway, it must continue moving in the same direction it started with when its turn comes again. This applies even if the Magus lands on an Astral Zone (see "Encounter Squares: Astral Zones") and is transferred to another pathway. Only if a Magus is sent to an Astral Zone by a card draw or combat result can the Magus's player choose the direction in which that Magus will travel on the pathway.

A Magus leaving a pathway from the inside track must continue to be moved clockwise once it reaches the outside track again.

Movement around the inside track may be either clockwise or counterclockwise, as desired. However, because of the presence of traffic arrows (see the following section), it is difficult to stay on the inside track for long. Once a player chooses a direction in which his Magus moves on the inside track, the Magus must continue in that direction until it leaves the inside track entirely.

Traffic arrows: The six Towers and six of the squares on the inside track each have a traffic arrow that points toward another specific square. If a player begins his turn with his Magus on a square with a traffic arrow, the marker's movement must follow the direction of that arrow. Otherwise, a player is free to ignore all traffic arrows as he moves his Magus around the board.

The six color-coded Towers from which the Magi start and the two Abyss squares in the middle of the board are not considered movement areas.

Example: The Red Magus is on the Dragon square, and its player announces: "Low score, toward the inside track." He rolls two dice, and a 4 and a 5 are his scores. His low score in this case is 4, his high score 5, and his total score 9. Thus he moves his Magus only four squares, going to Lightning Bolt, Black Stronghold, Monster's Lair, and Astral Zone. If he had called: "Total score, inside track," his Magus would have ended up on the Enchanted Vale square. If the movement score he gained had been a 1 or 2, his Magus could not have entered the inside track.

Example: The Blue Magus is on the Iron Tower square, and its player announces: "Total, toward the inside track." He rolls a 12. He moves his Magus as follows: Purple Stronghold, Omen, Astral Zone, Giant, Star, Cloud Castle, Star (he forgot to call "clockwise" or "counterclockwise" for his inside track movement, so a die is rolled; a 4 results, so he turns right); Temple, Star, Omen (another die roll results in a 6; he turns right again), Enchanted Vale (one more roll—a 1, meaning a left turn), and Omen. Had his last die roll been even, his Magus would have ended up on the Star, meaning it would have to leave the inside track on the player's next turn anyway.

As the result of a Star or Omen card draw, it is possible that a Magus will be directed toward one of two equally likely destination squares. For example, as the result of an Omen card draw, the Red Magus is directed to land on the nearest Power Zone in its direction of travel. However, the Red Magus is approaching the inside track from a pathway, and two Power Zones are ahead of it, each equally distant from the marker but one lying to the left and one to the right on the inner track. In such cases, 1d6 is rolled, and the marker is moved according to the result: odd = left, even = right.

Acquisitions

Acquisitions—the Spell, Gem, and Gold tiles—are used in the MAGUS! game to acquire Power Zones and their Alliance cards, and to pay debts. One Power Zone may be acquired by paying the Banker either one Spell tile, two Gem tiles, or three Gold tiles, if that Power Zone is unowned and has been landed upon at the end of that player's movement turn.

Acquisitions are nontransferable (e.g., two Gem tiles do not equal a Spell tile; one Spell tile does not equal three Gold tiles, etc.). If a player does not have the required number of Gold, Gem, or Spell tiles when he wishes to acquire a Power Zone, he may not purchase that Power Zone. If a player does not have the required number of tiles to pay a debt to the Banker or to another player, he must liquidate his Alliance cards to pay those debts (see "Liquidation Rules" and "Bargaining").

Colored chits

Many color-coded chits are included for each player's use. When a player gains a Power Zone and its Alliance card, he places a chit of his color on his newly acquired Power Zone to indicate that that square and its corresponding Alliance card are his. This lets everyone know which Power Zones are owned and gives other players better ideas on safe directions in which to move, since landing on someone else's Power Zone can be hazardous.

Encounter Squares

The squares on the game board contain designs representing either Stars, Omens, Power Zones, Astral Zones, Strongholds, Towers, and the Abyss. These are described below.

Blue Stars: A player whose Magus lands on one of these squares collects two Gold tiles, then draws one Star card and immediately applies the results called for by the card. Cards are returned face up to the bottom of the deck. Once the deck has been exhausted, the cards are reshuffled and placed face down to be drawn from again.

Red Stars: A player whose Magus lands on one of these squares collects one Spell tile, then draws one Star card and immediately applies the results called for by the card. Cards are returned face up to the bottom of the deck. Once the deck has been exhausted, the cards are reshuffled and placed face down to be drawn from again.

Omens: A player whose Magus lands

on one of these squares collects one Gem tile and draws one Omen card. Omen cards are marked either "PLAY" or "SAVE." A played card is returned face up to the bottom of the deck after the instructions on it have been followed. A saved card may be played at the owning player's option during the current or a subsequent turn, then is returned face up to the bottom of the deck. Once the deck has been exhausted, the cards are reshuffled and placed face down to be drawn from again.

Power Zones: Each Power Zone (e.g., Godsend, Alchemist, Djinni, etc.) has a corresponding Alliance card. When a player's Magus lands upon an unowned Power Zone square, he may acquire the corresponding Alliance card by paying either three Gold tiles, two Gem tiles, or one Spell tile to the Banker. Alliance cards cannot be acquired without these exact amounts.

If the Power Zone landed upon belongs to an opponent, the landing Magus can be attacked in any one of a number of ways, as detailed in "Conducting Attacks."

Astral Zones: When a player's Magus ends its movement directly upon an Astral Zone square, 1d6 is cast. The number generated indicates the random Astral Zone square to which that Magus is immediately moved. If the number generated is that of the Magus's current Astral Zone square, no further movement occurs and play passes to the next person. This Astral movement occurs even if the Magus was forced into an Astral Zone square as the result of an attack made against it.

Strongholds: There are three color-coded Stronghold squares per Magus color. Two of these squares are located near each player's Tower, and are marked "GAIN 2 GOLD" and "GAIN 1 GEM." The third Stronghold square is located some distance from each Tower and is marked "GAIN 1 SPELL." When a Magus lands on its own Stronghold square, the player immediately gains the amount noted on that square from the Banker.

If a Magus lands on an opponent's Stronghold square, the owning player may use his Alliance cards to attack the landing player's Magus (see "Conducting Attacks").

Towers: As noted earlier, Magi start at their respective Towers. In addition, when a Magus is captured as the result of an attack, that Magus is placed on the victorious Magus's Tower. Captured Magi can escape imprisonment by using the system outlined in "Conducting Attacks: Capture." Magi may acquire more than one Tower (see "Multiple Towers").

Abyss: When a Magus is abyssed as a result of an attack made against it, that Magus is placed on the Abyss square marked "5." The abyssed player immediately pays one Gold, one Gem, and one Spell tile to the attacking player (see "Liquidation Rules" if necessary). On the abyssed player's next turn, he again pays out one Gold, one Gem, and one Spell tile, and then rolls two dice. A roll of 5-12 allows that player to advance to the "7" Abyss square. On the abyssed player's next turn, the same sum is again paid to the attacking player, and the dice are again rolled. A roll of 7-12 must be made to cast the Magus out of the Abyss and onto one of the six Astral Zones (determine which by rolling ld6). Until a Magus escapes the Abyss, its player must continue to pay the attacking player in this manner. If all of the abyssed player's acquisitions and Alliance cards are liquidated, that player is removed from the game (see "Liquidation Rules"). Magus markers are not liquidated in this case, but are acquired by the attacking player once the abyssed player is eliminated (see "Multiple Towers").

Alliance Card Attack Values

	2d6 roll needed to:	
Card is used:	**Capture**	**Send to Abyss**
By itself	2-3	2
With shape or color meld	2-5	2-3
With natural mold	2-7	2-5

Absolutely no bargains may be struck with an abyssed player. Until an abyssed player's Magus escapes, he may not use his Alliance cards to attack other Magi. Additionally, no Star or Omen cards may be played for or against an abyssed player. More than one Magus may be in the Abyss at any time.

If any Magus is directed to land on a Star or Omen square as the result of an attack made against it, that player is not allowed to collect any acquisitions, nor is he allowed to draw any sort of card. If the square on which the Magus finally rests is an unowned Power Zone, the player cannot buy that Power Zone. If the Magus is directed to land on one of its own Stronghold squares, the player is unable to collect any acquisitions. However, if that Magus lands on a Stronghold square or Power Zone of another player, that Magus can be attacked again (see "Conducting Attacks: Multiple Attacks").

Conducting Attacks

When a Magus lands on a Power Zone or Stronghold square belonging to another Magus, it may be attacked by the player owning those areas. Attacking players refer to their Alliance card melds and special attack powers, noting the attack possibilities of each card. Attacks are always optional, never required.

An attacking player may: attempt to **capture** the landing Magus. thus sending that Magus to the attacker's Tower; attempt to **abyss** the landing Magus, thus sending that Magus to the Abyss; or use **special attacks** upon the landing Magus, as noted on those Alliance cards involved. Unless a multiple attack is possible, only one attack may be made against a Magus per turn (see "Conducting Attacks: Multiple Attacks").

Whenever an attack is made that involves either the capture, abyssment, or special-attack routines, the attacking player must give one Spell tile to the Banker, whether the attack is successful or not. *If the attacking player has no Spell tiles, no attacks can be made by him.* If multiple attacks are made, each attack costs one Spell tile (see "Conducting Attacks: Multiple Attacks").

If a Magus lands upon a Power Zone, only the Alliance cards of that Power Zone and its melds may be used in attacks against the landing Magus. If a Stronghold square is landed upon, however, any one Alliance card or meld owned by the attacking Magus may be selected to conduct the attack(s).

Melds and attacks

Unmelded attacks: A Power Zone whose Alliance card is not related by shape or color to any other Power Zone that a player owns (e.g., the player owns Djinni (red triangle) and Golden Bridge (green circle)) is considered to be **unmelded.** A Magus that lands upon an unmelded Power Zone may be attacked by the player who owns that Power Zone. On a 2d6 roll of 3 or less, the landing Magus is captured; on a 2, the landing Magus is abyssed (see "Encounter Squares: Abyss"). The owning player may instead use the special attack on that Alliance card.

Shape-meld attacks: A shape meld is formed by two or more Alliance cards related by shape (e.g., Phantoms (red square) and Cloud Castle (blue square)). A Magus landing on a Power Zone within a shape meld can be captured on a 2d6 roll of 5 or less; on a 3 or less, the Magus is abyssed. The owning player could alternately use any one special attack from an Alliance card within that shape meld.

Color-meld attacks: A color meld is formed by four or more Alliance cards related by color, regardless of shapes, as in: Black Hand (red triangle), Phantoms (red square), Pirates (red cross), and Witch (red circle). A Magus landing on a Power Zone within a color meld can be captured on a 2d6 roll of 5 or less; on a 3 or less, the Magus is abyssed. The owning player could alternately use any one special attack from an Alliance card within that color meld.

Shape/color mixing: An attacker who does not possess a natural meld (see the following section) cannot mix both shape and color melds in his attacks against a landing Magus, assuming that the attacker

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owns both sorts of melds.

Example: A Magus lands on the Iron Tower (green square). The attacking player has the Alchemist (green circle), Bog (green triangle), Priest (green cross), and Giant (blue square). He can make either a shape-meld attack or a color-meld attack, but not both.

Natural-meld attacks: A natural meld is a set of two Alliance cards having both the same color and shape (there are 16 natural melds in the game). For example, Phantoms and Wishing Well form a natural meld, because they are related both by color and shape (both are red squares). Godsend and Wall of Fire also form a natural meld (both are yellow crosses). Natural melds are the strongest melds possible in the MAGUS! game, giving the owning player a better attack capability. A Magus landing on a Power Zone within a natural meld can be captured on a 2d6 roll of 7 or less; on a 5 or less, the Magus is abyssed. The owning player can, however, elect to use one or more special attacks from Alliance cards within that natural meld (see the following section).

Multiple attacks

A Magus landing on a Power Zone within a natural meld can be attacked by one or both special attacks from the two Alliance cards within that natural meld. Each special attack costs one Spell tile (given by the attacking player to the Banker). If both special attacks are made, the attacking player must specify which attack is made first.

If the natural meld involved is but one of several natural melds owned by the attacking player, and if that meld is related to some of the other natural melds by color or shape, then the attacking player may make even more attacks on the landing Magus. For each related natural meld, an additional attempt may be made to either capture or abyss the landing Magus, as the attacking player chooses. Optionally, the attacking player may use one or more special attacks from the related natural melds agains the landing Magus. The attacking player must specify the order in which such attacks are made. One Spell tile must be paid to the Banker per attack of any sort.

Example: A Magus lands upon the Elf King. The player owning the Elf King not only has the Elf King/Gemwood natural meld (yellow circles), but also has the Godsend/Wall of Fire natural meld (yellow crosses), related by color to the previous meld. Thus, the owning player could get two attacks to capture the landing player, two attacks to abyss the landing player, or any combination of two of those attacks. The attacking player could instead use any or all special attacks from these four Alliance cards.

Example: Suppose the attacking player had the Elf King/Gemwood (yellow circles), Witch/Cauldron (red circles), and Demon/Ethereal Realm (yellow, squares) natural melds. If a Magus lands on the Elf King, all three natural melds would be open for use in the attack. However, if the Ethereal Realm was landed upon, only two of those natural melds could be used (the Witch/Cauldron meld is not related to the Demon/Ethereal Realm meld).

It is possible that as a result of a special attack, a landing Magus may land on another Power Zone or Stronghold square owned by the attacking Magus or another Magus entirely. In this case, the landing Magus may be attacked again and again if such results are continually brought to bear.

An attacking player can combine capture or abyssment attacks, if such is allowed in these rules, but cannot combine either of those attacks with any special attacks during his turn.

Types of attacks

Capture: When a Magus is captured, the marker is placed on the attacking player's Tower. The captive player immediately gives one Alliance card of his choice to the attacking player and must continue to give one Alliance card for each turn that his Magus doesn't escape imprisonment. Escape can be attempted on any

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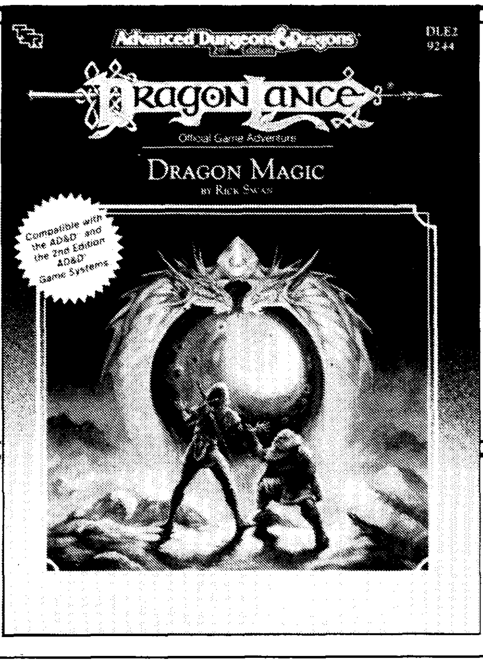
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Magus Combat Results Table

Tie roll	Effects on attacker and defender
1 & 1	Attacker is sent to his Tower; defender gains one Spell tile from Banker
2 & 2	No effect on attacker; defender loses one turn
3 & 3	Attacker gains two Spell tiles from Banker; defender sent to his Tower
4 & 4	Attacker gains one Alliance card of his choice from defender
5 & 5	Attacker gains one Gem, one Spell, and one Gold tile each from the defender (see "Liquidation Rules" if necessary)
6 & 6	Attacker gains any three acquisitions of defender (see "Liquidation Rules" if necessary)

Multiple Towers

A player Magus marker may be acquired by another player as noted in the rules on abyssment (see "Encounter Squares: Abyss"), capture (see "Conducting Attacks: Capture"), or liquidation (see "Liquidation Rules"). When a player acquires another player's Magus marker, the corresponding lower and Stronghold squares become his property. That player collects Gold, Gem, or Spell tiles when landing on these additional Stronghold squares; he can also escape to either Tower after he is captured (see "Conducting Attacks: Capture") and may send captured opponents to either Tower. Opponents landing on these additional Stronghold squares may be attacked normally. Players may have as many Towers as there are Magus markers. Note, however, that the acquired Magus marker is not used in play afterward; it merely indicates which Stronghold colors now belong to the player possessing it.

Winning

A player wins the MAGUS! game when he has collected all other Magus markers and Towers, or has captured all Power Zones on the game board. Other players may concede to allow one player to win if they wish to end the game earlier.

Optional Rules

If players want to spice up their games, they may elect to try the following optional rules.

Unowned Power Zone attacks

The Priest, Temple, Death, and Underworld Alliance cards list no special attacks as such, instead referring the players to the rules for details (see "Conducting Attacks: Special Attacks"). If these cards are not owned, the following rules may be applied to allow these cards to attack Magi passing these squares. As each Power zone is subsequently purchased, the optional attack rule given herein no longer applies to that specific Power Zone, and the normal special attack applies.

Priest: Magi landing on or passing the Priest square must stop to be judged before continuing. Roll 1d6 and note the results from the table below.

1-2: Donate 1-6 Gold tiles to the Banker, then finish moving (see "Liquidation Rules" if necessary).

3-4: Place your Magus on the Temple and end its movement there; then read the following section on the Temple.

5-6: Pass, continuing normal movement. The Priest may be purchased if the Magus ended its movement here and if the Priest is not currently owned.

Temple: Players whose Magi land on the Temple (or are sent to it by the Priest) must roll 2d6 on the turn they land there and on each turn thereafter until they can leave. Consult the table below.

2-6: Donate one Gold tile to the Banker, but end movement in this space. One Gold tile must be donated each turn thereafter until the Magus rolls a 7-12 on the 2d6 (see "Liquidation Rules" if necessary). During this time period, the player cannot use his Alliance cards to attack any other player's Magus.

7-12: Leave the Temple and return to your own Tower. A player may buy the Temple if his Magus finished its movement in this square and gained this result, though his Magus must still move to his own Tower square.

Death: Magi landing on or passing Death must stop to be judged before continuing. Roll 1d6 and note the results from the table below.

1-2: Lose one Spell tile to the Banker, then continue on (see "Liquidation Rules" if necessary).

3-4: Place your Magus on the Underworld and end its movement there; then read the following section on the Underworld.

5-6: Pass, continuing normal movement. Death may be purchased if the Magus ended its movement here and if Death is not currently owned.

Underworld: Players whose Magi land on the Underworld (or are sent to it by Death) must roll 2d6 on the turn they land there and on each turn thereafter until they can leave. Consult the table below.

2-6: Stay in the Underworld. Meanwhile, this player's Alliance cards are buyable at normal costs if the corresponding Power Zones are landed on by other players.

7-12: Leave the Underworld and go to a random Astral Zone (roll ld6). A player may buy the Underworld if his Magus finished its movement in this square and gained this result, though his Magus must still move to the random Astral Zone.

Battling Magi

This attack option allows a player whose Magus ends its movement turn on a square containing another Magus to engage in Magus-to-Magus combat, if he so chooses. The landing player's Magus is the attacker; the defender is the player whose Magus already occupied the square by itself or with other Magi. Only one Magus in a square may be attacked by the attacker. This attack and its subsequent effects take precedent over all other situations created by the attacker's movement onto the defender's square; after resolving the battle, other situations (e.g., collecting acquisitions from the landing player, attacking the landing player's Magus with melds, etc.) are then dealt with in turn, but only if the landing player's Magus remains on the square at the end of the battle. A Magus subsequently sent back to the square on which it had just fought may do battle again if a defending Magus is present.

To do battle, each player rolls ld6. If the result is not a tie, no effects occur and the game proceeds. If a tie occurs, see the Magus Combat Results Table for the effects on the attacker and defender.

Credits

Those who playtested and contributed to the development of this game are given hereafter: Rob Kuntz, Ruth Ann Fazzini, Tom Wham, James M. Ward, Kim Mohan, Tom Champeny, Ron Bearce, Eric Shook, Gary Gygax, Dave Trampier, Bill Griffing, Jim Pearce, Skip Williams, and the "Duck."

Final editing and development: the DRAGON® Magazine staff.

Artwork and graphics: Tom Wham and Deb Stern.

Dedication: To Ruth and Amanda, the two loves of my life.

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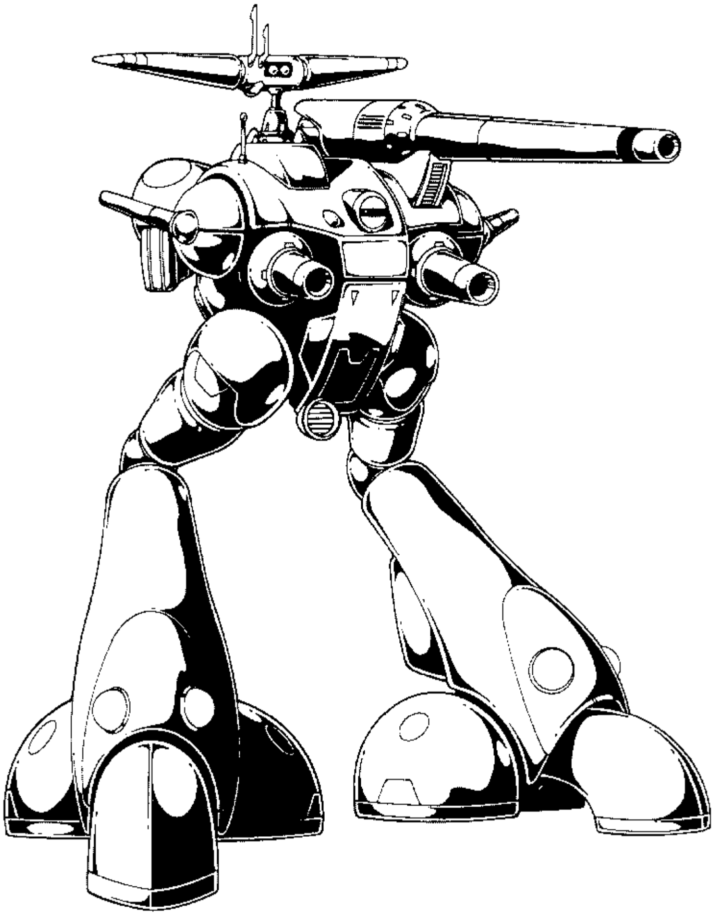

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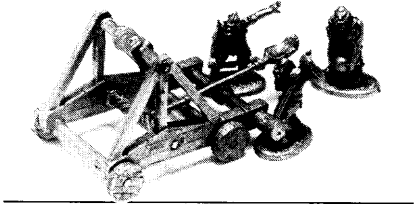

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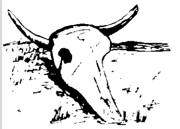

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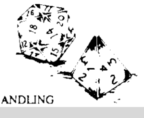

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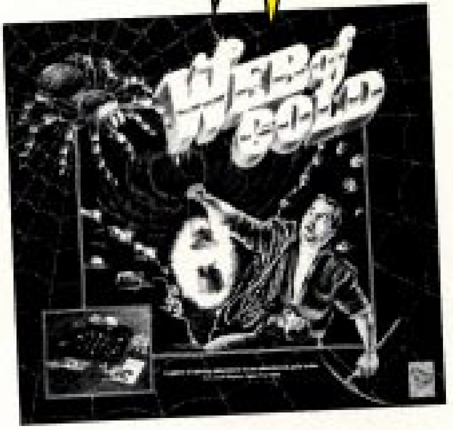

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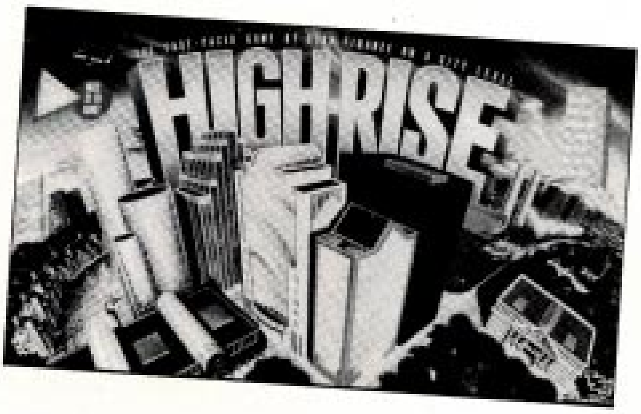

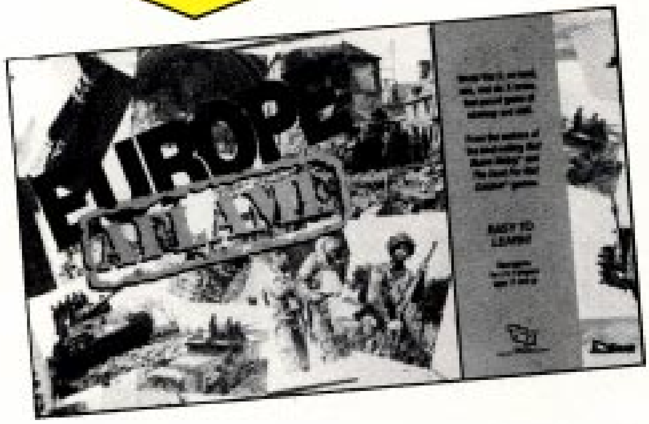

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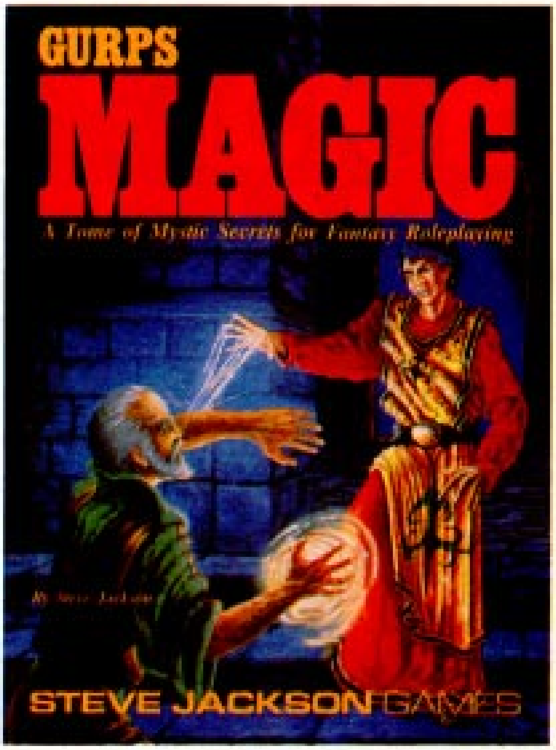
GURPS
MAGIC
A Tome of Mystic Secrets for Fantasy Roleplaying
By Steve Jackson
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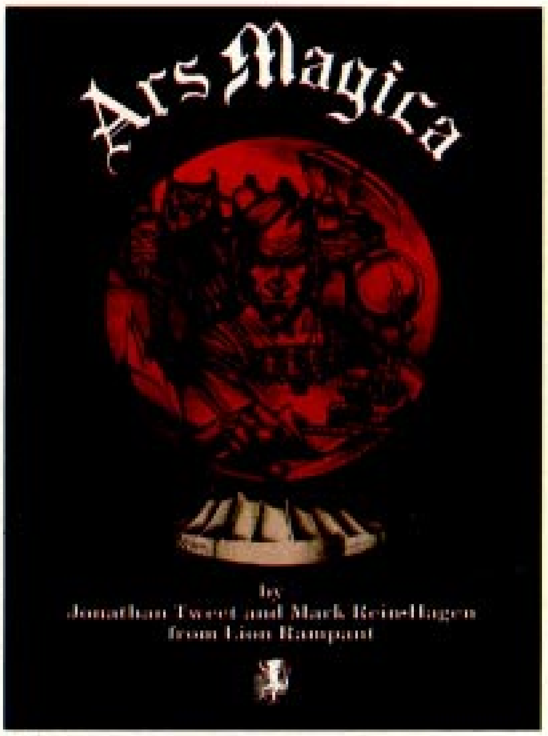
Ars Magica
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from Lion Rampant

Role-playing reviews

In the beginning, there was the *fireball*. . . .

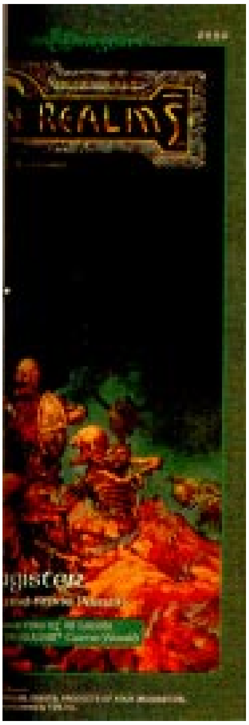
©1989 by Ken Rolston

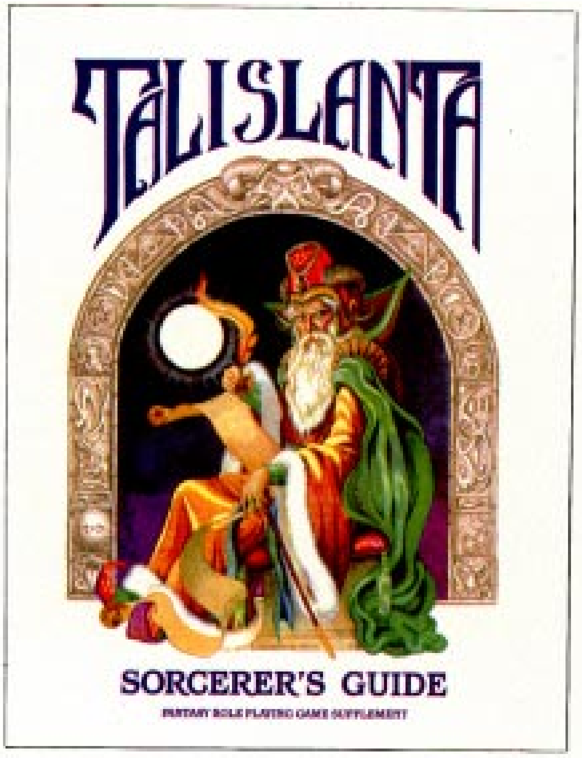
When we first laid eyes upon polyhedral dice, we discovered the power to work magic. All our lives we had fantasized about making pencils zoom around our desk tops at school with the pure force of mind, or melting annoying mundane folk with a mere gesture.

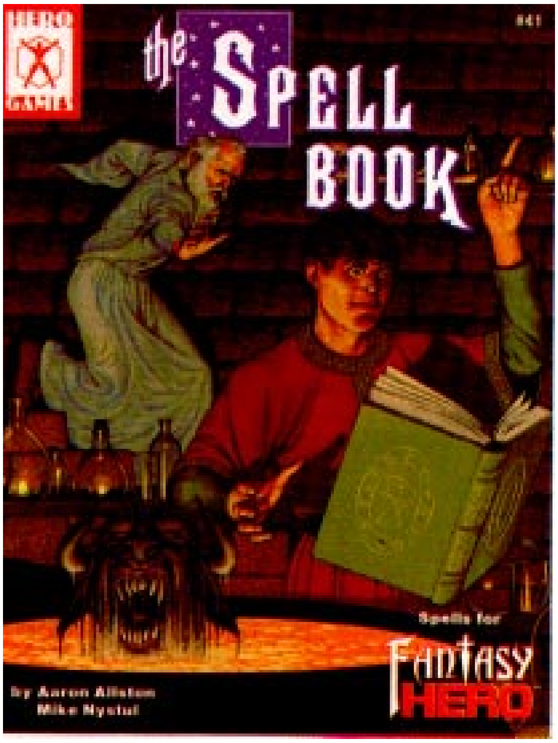
Then came the D&D® game. We immediately got inside our D&D® characters and drove around, casting *fireballs*, gulping potions of *ethereal rapid transit*, twirling + 10 swords, and generally indulging our fantasies of untapped arcane power. In those days, all we needed were spell lists and random treasure tables. When those spell lists and treasures grew a trifle stale, we whipped up new spells and magical widgets in gay abundance. And we were perfectly happy.

But finally came the loss of innocence. "Say, wait a minute. These spells don't make sense! What we ought to have is a logical, self-consistent magic system, one that grows out of the culture, technology, and metaphysics of our fantasy campaign."

For many of us, the good old D&D® game's spell lists and magical artifacts are just fine, particularly because they're so easy to customize and elaborate to our tastes. But that game's magic system is anything but elegant in design, and many gamers keep looking for something fancier. The games and supplements reviewed here are various expressions of that search for a fancier magic system.







GURPS® Magic
Sourcebook for the GURPS® game
112-page softbound book
Steve Jackson Games $14.95
Design: Steve Jackson, Marc Janssen, Walter Milliken, Steffan O'Sullivan, W. Dow Reider, Brett Slocum, and Daniel Thibault

The GURPS® (Generic Universal RolePlaying System) game itself has its antecedents in Metagaming's MELEE and WIZARD games—two small, fantasy-combat war games—and Metagaming's THE FANTASY TRIP game, a system that elaborated the principles of the MELEE and WIZARD games into a full-featured fantasy role-playing game (FRPG). The GURPS® system is characterized by:

1. An informal but earnest war-gaming flavor (hexes for movement, careful attention to game balance, relatively elaborate but painstakingly coherent and logical rules);
2. A detailed, flexible PC-design system with point-cost attributes, skills, advantages, disadvantages, and personality quirks; and
3. A disdain for polyhedral dice.

But the most prominent feature of the GURPS® game is its dedication to providing a truly generic role-playing system, one that permits the same basic rules to be applied to a wide variety of adventure settings: science fiction, near-future dystopia, horror, heroic fantasy, exotic historical fantasy, and so on.

In the "Role-playing Reviews" column in issue #124, I offered the judgment that "Steve Jackson Games lacks the production capacity to support a wide variety of role-playing settings." I was obviously wrong. Steve Jackson Games does have the production capacity to turn out campaign supplements in a remarkable variety of settings: the GURPS® Space, GURPS® Japan, GURPS® Horseclans, GURPS® Humanx, GURPS® Autoduel, GURPS® Horror, and GURPS® Ice Age games. And all the supplements that I've read are notable for quality as well as quantity—not to say that I liked all of them or found all of them interesting, but that they were generally well-written and well-presented.

However, despite the system's origins in a heroic-fantasy setting, few GURPS® heroic-fantasy supplements have been published. The original fantasy setting supplement, the GURPS® Fantasy game, contained a detailed magic system and the other trappings of a complete FRPG, but not much in the way of a setting. One adventure supplement, *Harkwood,* was rather good but was medieval/chivalric in setting, with limited magic (unlike most heroic-fantasy campaigns).

The GURPS® Fantasy book is now out of print, replaced by the GURPS® Magic game (and, presumably, future fantasy-campaign supplements). The GURPS® Magic game is exciting, full of appealing and unusual ideas, and clearly presented with plenty of examples. You can do a lot with it, and most of what you can do feels logical and self-consistent.

My major reservation lies in the generic nature of the supplement. While the mechanics are admirable and (for lack of a better description) really keen, all the chrome and whiz-bang goodies don't quite come to life in the absence of a specific campaign setting. After all, powerful magical staves and elven rings are all very nice, but such magic takes on a deeper significance in the stories told of the land, the time, the peoples, and the deeds of an imagined fantasy world. The GURPS® Magic game is one of the most interesting fantasy supplements to come out in a long time—but I'll reserve final judgment until I've seen its systems implemented in adventures and campaigns.

Systems: GURPS® Magic game mechanics are powerful and flexible, with a vast inventory of familiar heroic-fantasy adventure effects derived from a remarkably simple and coherent set of basic principles. Here's where this supplement excels—and where it should be judged on its own stated objectives. The GURPS® Magic game sets out to provide a GM with a framework of coherent mechanics, a detailed spell list, and a large menu of customizing items and options from which he can create exactly the sort of magical campaign setting he wants. On this basis, the game is an unqualified success.

Character creation: Creating a magic-specialist PC is an involved process. First, you design your skills to match your conception of the character's experience, interests, and competence; then you select your spells. There are a lot of spells here—400 in all. The spells are arranged in hierarchies within various disciplines (Animal Spells; Body Control Spells, Water Elemental Spells, and so on), so maybe you can't get that trusty Fireball unless you get the Ignite Fire, Create Fire, and Shape Fire spells first. However, with the GURPS® character-creation system, a newcomer's GURPS® Fantasy PC can have spells and abilities equivalent to those of mid-level

AD&D® game wizards and clerics. The sample character included on pages 101-102, a sort of ranger/druid/wizard, is a charmer—the best advertisement for the system that any player could want. When browsing, check it out—and note that this is a beginning character, built from scratch. (GMs should notice that whipping up NPC companions and villains may be a bit of a chore.)

Mechanics: The actual mechanics of spell-casting are fairly simple. You have a skill rating for each spell, and must roll vs. your skill rating when casting the spell to see if it works. There are various systematic and circumstantial modifiers to skill tests. GURPS® skill mechanics include fairly common critical successes and failures, which the GM is invited to improvise on the spot, thus making spell-casting a dramatic but somewhat less-reliable ability than in many other FRPGs. Spells cost points, which are typically taken first from Strength (reductions fatigue you), then from Hits Taken (reductions are equivalent to wounds). Spell costs may vary according to circumstances, critical successes, and various other special rules. Many spells may be maintained for extended durations by paying additional points. The skill roll, with its variety of modifiers, and the spell-point cost system are the GURPS® game's basic elaborations on melee-round-style D&D® game fantasy magic.

Beyond these basics, various rules provide additional magical atmosphere. For example, missile-type spells have to be targeted like missile weapons. With ceremonies, assisting characters can contribute points for expensive spells. At lower skill levels, casters must be able to make elaborate hand gestures and clearly speak words of power; at higher levels of skill, a caster may not need to speak or gesture.

All things considered, the mechanics are comparatively involved but not daunting. The presentation of the rules is clean, structured, and organized. Tables, examples, minor rules, commentaries, and friendly notes are conveniently tucked into the margins for ease of reference and browsing.

Magical items: The manufacture of magical artifacts is an integral part of the spell-casting system. From a systems point of view, this is great, since the rules for spells cover magical-item use as well. Many spell effects can be bound into an object; each spell description indicates whether the spell power can be placed in an item, and each lists the power costs to create the item (and any other special rules). Guidelines for times, expenses, and market values of enchantments are detailed and specific. From a campaign-setting point of view, the mechanics and procedures provide a logical and dramatically plausible foundation for the role that magical items play in the cultures of the campaign. Furthermore, the GURPS® system creates a device to effectively support the spell-casting specialist's dramatic role as wizard-enchanter. The sample market values of magical items, for instance, feel right. Some modest widgets (like minor armor enchantments and + 1 arrows) seem to be within the budget of the poorest adventurer, while more powerful popular items (like + 1 swords and Haste amulets) cost more than half a middle-class person's annual income.

This is a great improvement over games that have spells and magical items but no plausible theoretical or economic relationship between these two sources of magic. For example, in the D&D®, AD&D®, and Games Workshop's WARHAMMER™ FANTASY ROLEPLAY games, the GM is obviously the guy who gets to create all the magical devices; all the enchantments are done offstage, where no one can ask embarrassing questions about how they're done. (Yeah, the AD&D® and D&D® games make feeble attempts at rationalizing PC creation of magical items, but such attempts are patently bogus.)

The spells: There are lots of spell lists in this game. As with the detailed character-creation system, a large inventory of choices means a lot of reading and choice-making, which implies a commitment of time and energy. And a responsi-

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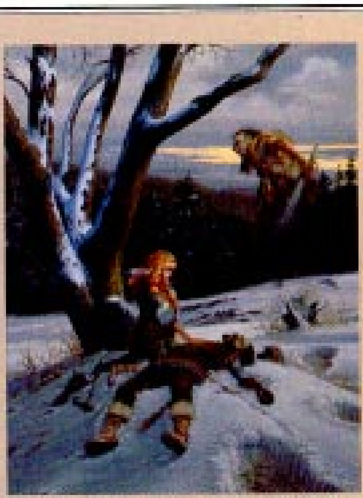

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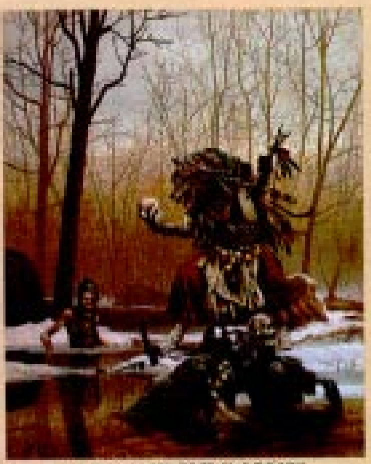

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ble GM has an even heavier burden than a player. For dedicated, sophisticated campaigners, this product may be worth the labor, but I don't recommend such an abundance of riches for a beginning or casual gamer.

The selection of effects is comprehensive. The text descriptions vary in detail from short paragraphs to multicolumn treatments. While reading the spells, I found a number of things that seemed unclear or ambiguous, but nothing really careless or offensive. The presentation was clear and convenient for reference, especially the excellent summary table, listing all the spells in alphabetical order, with page references and compact effect descriptions.

I was a bit put off by some shamelessly arbitrary and game-expedient effects. For example, when a character Shapeshifts, his clothing, jewelry, and armor vanish, then reappear when the spell ends. Backpacks and held items drop to the ground. This appallingly inexplicable phenomenon is more marvelous to me than the actual Shapeshifting. Where does that armor go? And how do the backpacks fasteners miraculously open to permit the gear to slip from the wolfman's back? In the game's defense, however, the rules are consistent in this style of favoring simple, game-convenient interpretations over fussy, detailed treatments of tricky issues. While taking notes on the spells, I made dozens of picky objections until I came across one informal, practical note to the GM: "This ain't physics." Right; it is, after all, only a game. If an individual GM is horrified by a specific spell description, he should alter it to suit his tastes.

Though I winced at some specific interpretations, I was generally impressed by the variety, logic, and fantasy flavor of the spell effects. A few unusual effects I admire include: Soul Rider (see through a subject's eyes, hear through his ears), Borrow Language, Roundabout (spin a victim-serious business in a system with facing rules), Strike Deaf, Strike Dumb, Itch (reduce Dexterity until the victim takes a turn to scratch), Rider Within (as with Soul Rider, only through an animal), Master (hypnotize an animal by staring at it, like Crocodile Dundee), Dehydrate (drain moisture from a victim's body), Body of Water (alter your body into a humanoid form of water), Hex (stick an item or spell effect to a victim), Drain Mana (leave a magic-dead area), and Death Vision (send a false—or accurate—presentiment of death to terrify a victim).

Improvised spells: An optional extension of the basic mechanics permits characters to improvise spells on the spot. This option requires the application of a group of general concepts to specific instances. The example given is a spell-caster trying to Protect a Book from Water, which might be interpreted as Protecting Plant, Weakening Water, or Controlling Water. A caster's knowledge of these general concepts is derived from the extent of his knowledge of spells in various disciplines-a clever extension of basic rules to an exotic application. Improvising spells is usually too slow, expensive, and unreliable for combat, but just right for whipping up special effects as problem-solving resources. Provision is made for adapting this improvisational spell system to Futhark Viking runes, a particularly nice feature for a bogus Viking fantasy campaign. The text warns that this system is only suitable for gamers comfortable with informal improvisation and GM intervention; my guess is that it would be nice to encounter this as NPC magic before experimenting with it in session play.

Clerical magic: The GURPS® Magic game is not designed to produce distinctive divine spell-casters or cult magic effects. You can design fantasy religions for your campaigns, but the result will essentially be divine wizards. The strongest feature for fantasy religions is the game's advantages/disadvantages character-creation system, which provides a convenient link between a character's actions and magical power. For example, a character with a Pacifism disadvantage loses all his magical powers if he breaks his vows.

This is not to say that this supplement can't produce excellent clerical characters and religions for a fantasy campaign. The two sample religions given in the book are brief but effectively imagined. However, magical effects dependent on a divine being's magical actions (e.g., prayer, holy ground, divine intervention) are not accounted for in the spell lists and must be manufactured by a GM for his fantasy campaign.

Alchemy: Alchemical elixirs (potions, powders, pastilles, and unguents) are produced by alchemy, a skill distinct from mage skills. Elixirs do not have spell effects but do have their own unique magical effects. Descriptions include names derived from Greek mythology (e.g., a Hermes unguent is an Elixir of Stealth), times and expenses to create, and market values. For example, a Healing potion costs $120, while a Resurrection potion costs $25,000. I can't tell without seeing alchemists at work in a campaign setting, but my guess is that as PCs, they are not as cost effective as spell-casters, though their elixirs might provide a charming NPC-created source of limited magical items for those who are not spell-casters.

Fantasy creatures: Included are special game advantages and disadvantages suitable for fantasy characters, and rules for creating characters of typical fantasy races, like elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, orcs, reptile men, goblins, kobolds, ghouls, and minotaurs. Another section details magical creatures. Demons are evil, as usual, but are unable to harm a truly good person. ("Embarrass him, slaughter his friends, destroy his property . . . but not harm him.") Elementals haven't much personality, though they do have some interesting combat features. The treatments of golems and undead are sparse but clean. Familiars are available with a nice set of optional features.

Creating a fantasy campaign world: In two pages of text and a one-page "Fantasy Campaign Plan" worksheet, you get exceptionally cogent, thoughtful treatments of the role of magic in a fantasy world. This checklist of things a campaign designer should worry about ought to be required reading for all fantasy GMs.

However, the message is that GMs should be prepared to do a lot of work. The D&D®, AD&D®, WARHAMMER™ FANTASY ROLEPLAY, and Chaosium's RUNEQUEST® games have ready-to-run campaign settings to be used as published, adapted to suit, or simply used as models. The GURPS® model fantasy campaign has yet to be published. This, in fact, worries me a bit. With all the campaign settings and adventures published for the GURPS® game, why haven't we seen a high-fantasy setting exploiting the game's rich potential? The GURPS® Fantasy game was published a long time ago, yet I haven't heard much about GURPS® Fantasy campaigns. Perhaps the task of designing such a campaign that lives up to the system's high standards for logic and self-consistency is a bit intimidating, especially since you can get plenty of good fantasy flavor from the other systems with much less work.

For example, the character-design chapter says: "The GM should prepare a list of common magic items and equipment" for the players to review when they create their characters (and include prices, too). Well, this probably ought to be done for all fantasy campaign worlds—but, phew, more work for the overburdened GM. Admittedly, world creation is the sort of work many fantasy role-playing gamers love, but starting from scratch without a model may be difficult enough to discourage all but the most dedicated GMs.

Evaluation: The GURPS® Magic game is an excellent supplement for the GURPS® system, an effective expansion of the game's original fantasy magic rules with added features and wise campaign-design guidance. As a FRPG magic supplement, it boasts exceptional virtues in systems and conceptions. As a generic supplement, however, it lacks the distinctive charm and atmosphere of a specific fantasy campaign setting. As a source book for enriching the magical elements in your FRPG campaign, it is useful—perhaps inspirational—regardless of the system you use.

ARS MAGICA game
Game and campaign setting
160-page softbound book
Lion Rampant $14.95
Design: Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein•Hagen

Winner of the Gamer's Choice Award for best FRPG for 1987, and nominated for the 1988 ORIGINS™ Best Role-Playing Rules award, the ARS MAGICA game has already received considerable critical recognition. Its mechanics and fantasy campaign setting are strikingly original and appealing. Lion Rampant—a small, independent game company—achieves a remarkably satisfying graphic look with modest resources, and the quality of writing, editing, and presentation is first-class.

The ARS MAGICA game is a complete FRPG system, albeit an admittedly specialized one. Like Chaosium's PENDRAGON game, which is ideally suited for its specific Arthurian chivalric campaign setting, the ARS MAGICA game achieves its excellence by narrowly focusing its energies on its own campaign setting-a primarily historical Western medieval background, altered by the introduction of an arcane magical technology restricted in practice to a very small, private organization of wizards. All PCs come from this exclusive group, called the Order of Hermes. The interests of this group center on the lore and practice of magic, on discovering magic's principles, and on exploring magic's mysteries in the world.

In addition to the originality of its systems and campaign setting, the game champions a distinctive style and tone particularly effective in developing the dramatic and narrative values of the local gaming group. The designers, Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein•Hagen, refer to this approach as "troupe-style play," drawing upon the theatrical associations of the word "troupe," meaning a group or company of actors. Their stress on narrative values is suggested in the term they choose to describe an ARS MAGICA game GM: the "storyguide." This emphasis on the dramatic and narrative elements of role-playing produces some distinctive and thought-provoking perspectives on commonly accepted conventions of role-playing gaming.

Mechanics: The ARS MAGICA game employs some interesting variants on the familiar mechanics conventions of role-playing games. I've always found mechanics explanations dry and difficult reading in the more expansive presentations of role-playing game texts, and even more dry and difficult in the limited space of a game review, so I'll cheerfully avoid specific mechanics analysis here. In brief, the game's basic system conventions are simple and concisely expressed in conception, fairly complex and sophisticated in application, and clearly presented with numerous well-developed examples. I had to read fairly close because the systems don't resemble any of the myriad role-playing game systems with which I'm familiar, but I seldom felt the need to backtrack, and usually found the examples effectively clarified the text.

Character creation: Right off, the game clearly states: "It is your responsibility as a player to create a character which fits into the group." As a GM weary of worrying over potential PC clashes that result from the unfettered creative urges of innocently self-indulgent players bent on designing "totally intense" characters, I sigh with pleasure at this notice: The game also abandons the conventional notion that all PCs ought to be balanced in game-related power. Wizards (called "magi," in the plural form, "magus" in the singular) are unambiguously more powerful than the other types of characters, namely companions (laymen with various support skills) and grogs (fighters). All characters are created with distinctive skills, abilities, and personality features. The character-creation process is rather involved and time-consuming, but most of the time goes into conceptualization rather than number-crunching and formula-juggling. This is clearly not a game in which you'd be comfortable losing a PC, except in the case of the grogs, whose deaths are described as commonplace events during a game session. In fact, grogs are not individually owned by any one player, but are held in common by the gaming group (the troupe) and are handed from player to player in successive sessions, presumably to prevent players from identifying too closely with these doomed mercenaries.

Combat: The text states that combat "is less important in ARS MAGICA than it is in other games, so the combat rules offered are not as complex, but center instead on playability and fun." I think this is more the opinion of designers familiar and comfortable with their own designs than an accurate comparison with other common combat systems. The combat mechanics provide most of the features you'd expect in a more complex, sophisticated FRPG—defensive dodges and parries, wound and fatigue levels with associated combat penalties, combat modifiers, special maneuvers, and so on. The pacing and complexity of combat are roughly comparable to melees in RUNEQUEST®, GURPS®, and WARHAMMER™ FANTASY ROLEPLAY games, and are certainly more elaborate than D&D® or AD&D® game combat. The rules presentation is again fairly clear and readable, but combat may take some practice to master, since the systems don't closely resemble those of other familiar games. It's not that I found the system unappealing or exceptionally difficult; on the contrary, I liked the flavor and clarity. It's just that I saw nothing particularly unique about it that would induce me to abandon an already hard-earned competence in a current system—and certainly not on the basis that combat is less complex, more playable, or more fun than in other games.

Magic galore: This is the part that excited me. The magic has elegant tone and atmosphere, and a framework that, given its premises, is logical and coherent. Further, it provides both formulaic spells (narrowly defined, but swift and reliable magical effects) and spontaneous spells (improvised applications of magical principles—slow and unreliable, but flexibly adaptable to the problem at hand).

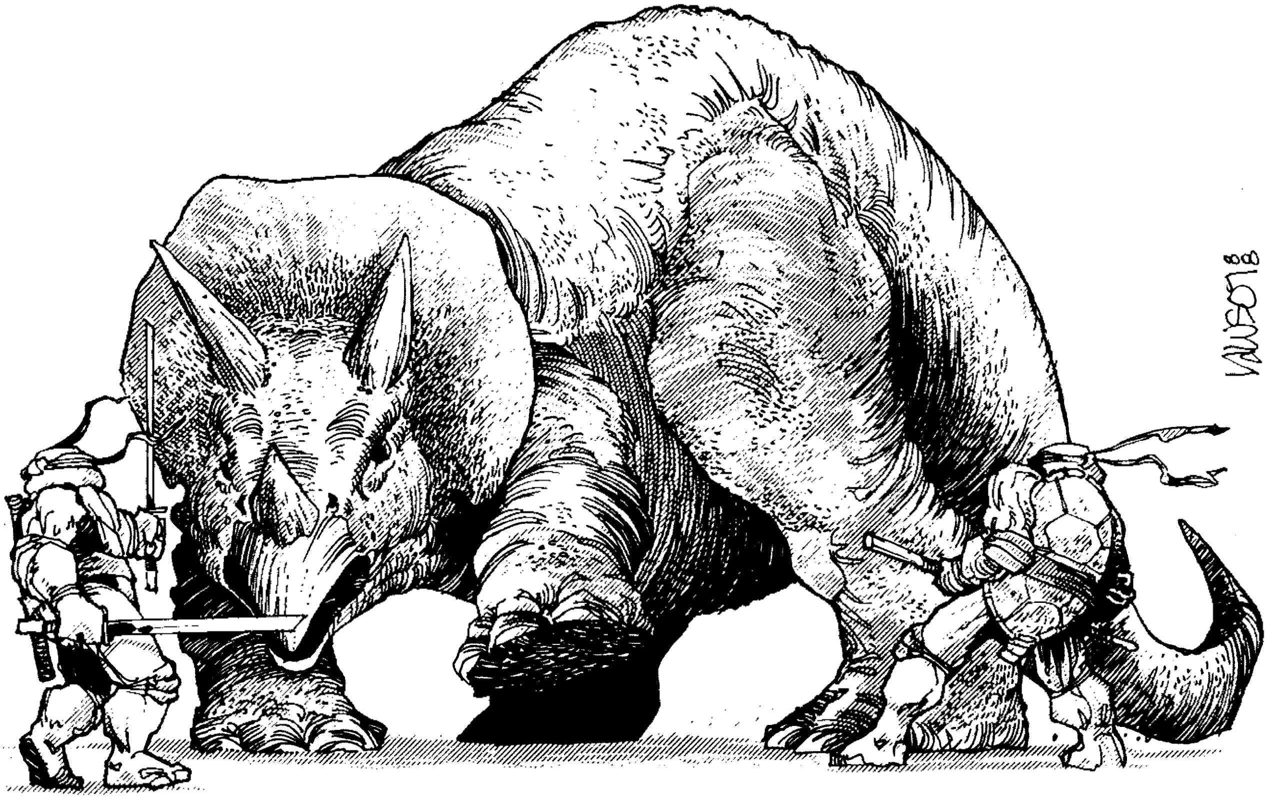
Magical effects are produced by an active Technique (analogous to a verb in sentence structure) applied to a Form (analogous to a direct object). There are five Techniques—Create, Perceive, Transform, Destroy, Control—and ten Forms—Animal, Water, Air, Body, Plant, Fire, Image, Mind, Earth, and Magical Energy. The Techniques and Forms are referred to by their Latin names (Latin is used throughout the text to give a medieval, scholarly feel); thus, Create Fire is known as Creo Ignem.

The spells: In each class of applications of Technique to Form, numerous spell effects might be produced. The spell lists provided are no more than a subset of the possible formulaic expressions of the magical principles, while theoretically infinite variations are possible with spontaneous spells. For example, here are some of the formulaic spells listed for the Creo Ignem (Create Fire) application: Boil Water Elemental, Moonbeam, Palm of Flame, Heat of the Searing Forge, Lamp Without Flame, Flash of the Scarlet Flames, Pilum of Fire, and Arc of Fiery Ribbons.

The spell lists are comprehensive. The titles are in a language that evokes a proper medieval fantasy atmosphere. The themes, powers, and utilities of the spells are keyed to the medieval setting and the interests of scholarly magic hackers, rather than dedicated primarily to the specific purposes of war gaming. The spells include some distinctive and appealing effects, like the Creo Aquam spells of Burden of the Watery Load (increases encumbrance and leaves big, wet footprints), Lungs of Water and Death (fills a victim's lungs with fluid), and Creeping Oil (impregnates porous material like cloth with flammable oil).

Formulaic spells work pretty much like spells from other FRPGs. Spontaneous spells, on the other hand, let wizards improvise magical effects with the general concepts suggested by Techniques and Forms (in a fashion similar to the optional improvised spell rules of the GURPS® Magic system). The player and GM consult to establish a difficulty level and spell effects based on comparisons with listed formulaic spells. The example given in the text is that of clearing the air of a foul stench. The player and GM agree that the spell effect is Perdo Aurum (Destroy Air), and that it is of a relatively low degree of difficulty. Of course, depending on the play styles of your own local gamers and game masters, you may reasonably envision something other than immediate and happy consensus when gamers and game masters consult on difficulty levels and spell effects—but with the proper spirit of trust and cooperation, such consultations need not be terribly time-consuming or controversial.

The game-mechanics formulas for determining if a spell-casting is successful depend on the wizard's knowledge of the



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Techniques and Forms, and upon various other circumstances, such as whether the wizard chooses to exert himself, to expend power from magical substances, to quick-cast, or to maintain one spell while casting another. The systems have lots of nice chrome and texture, with plenty of things to go marvelously right or horrendously wrong when the dice bounce.

Other magical trappings: Duels between wizards have always been nice bits in film and print, but they don't translate well to gaming (with the exception of the WIZARD minigame mentioned in the review of the GURPS® Magic game). The "certamen" (Latin for duel) is a polite, fatality-avoiding set of rules for duelling magi, eminently colorful and satisfying. The mechanics structure is simply a formula for opposed scores and dice, but the dramatic trappings are pretty neat. A common ground for contest is first agreed upon by the opponents. In the example given, the first party chooses the Technique (Creo—Create) and the second party chooses the Form (Corporem—Body). Two magical beings are then created to fight one another like remote-control monsters—a wolf—headed man in plate mail confronts an armored demonspawn. The dice determine the course of the combat, while the GM and players improvise the dramatic details to fit the dice results. The result is a quick, clean magical combat with theatrical flair.

What else looks neat? Well, the magus's laboratory looks like a great place for between-session solo play. Between adventures, magi can: extract magic power for boosting their spells; study various skills and lores; study and experiment in the arcane arts; learn, invent, and transcribe spells; or whip up magical devices and potions. The mechanics are simple, and the activities dramatically appropriate. And, like the GURPS® Magic game, the ARS MAGICA game has a system for custom-designing wizards familiars, with plenty of powers and abilities from which to choose (like invisibility, shapeshifting, teleport, and spell-casting).

The campaign setting: The campaign is set in medieval Europe. The magi voluntarily isolate themselves from the affairs of the world, thus permitting the historical medieval setting to be used with a minimum of accommodation to the nonhistori cal presence of powerful magic. In addition to the wizards of the Order of Hermes, other sources of fantasy magic include the Church, the Infernal Powers, and Faerie.

The Church is based on a fairly romantic, spiritualized notion of the historical medieval Christian church that features several manifestations of supernatural power, the foremost of which is the Dominion-the divine power attached to the land where Christian believers dwell. The Dominion's power is strongest on sacred ground and in the populous towns, weaker in the countryside, and absent in the wilderness. Other manifestations include Faith points (the chance of divine intervention) and holy relics. In general, however, a show of divine magic is an exceptional event—a marvel or a miracle—rather than the commonplace affair of clerical magic in most fantasy games.

The Infernal Powers, the Forces of Hell ruled by the Prince of Darkness, are likewise extremely powerful supernatural agents that rarely work openly for fear of direct confrontation with the Dominion. These forces act secretly through the corruption of diabolists and the temptation of the righteous. You'll never find more persuasive and odious villains than these fellows, and the irony is that many of the common folk, the nobility, and the clergy inaccurately identify magi with evil diabolists. Thus the people may fear and persecute good wizards even as these wizards confront the Legions of Darkness, the real enemies of the Church.

Faerie is the fourth of the major supernatural powers. Mythical, magical beings and kingdoms from Celtic and Arthurian sources can be introduced to an ARS MAGICA campaign through Faerie. The game includes a number of faerie beings and creatures in its bestiary, but their roles in the campaign are not extensively detailed, since the focus is on medieval wizards, not the realm of Faerie.

Wizards and medieval society: As previously noted, wizards have mutually agreed to withdraw from society into covenants where they may study and practice magic without interference. Among themselves, wizards order their affairs through the laws and codes of the Order of Hermes. Magi have agreed collectively to avoid betraying the interests of the Order, to avoid deadly confrontations with others in the Order, and to avoid activities that endanger other magi of the Order. In particular, the magi agree not to interfere in the affairs of the outside world, since such interference could in turn result in the outside world interfering with the security of the numerous covenants. Councils and tribunals of the Order meet to discuss issues of policy and negotiate conflicts. When one of the society has offended the Code of Conduct, a tribunal may declare a Wizards March—i.e., open season on the offender, a license to kill and loot the wayward wizards precious magical possessions. Certamen is a sanctioned nonlethal code of duelling among wizards for settling minor disputes; Wizard's War is the sanctioned lethal war between wizards who can no longer resolve their conflicts without the death of one party.

The major elements of society—the nobility, the church, the cityfolk, and the peasantry—are described concisely and effectively. The historical treatment is respectable and coherent, informed by a spirit and judgment suitable for a fantasy campaign, providing an admirably plausible, logical, and self-consistent setting.

The bestiary: This section begins with two reservations about monsters. First, it suggests that human antagonists are the most interesting, that monsters should be used sparingly—clearly a different posture than that taken by FRPGs such as the D&D® game. Further, it is expected that most monsters will be custom-designed by the storyguide, with the published examples intended as guidelines and models for construction. The general texts describe animals, demons, dragons, undead, elementals, faerie folk, fantastic beasts, and shapeshifters. These are above average in flavor and detail, but the developed examples, particularly of the giant and the shapeshifter, are first-class inspirational models for creature design.

Troupe play: The chapter on the player's role in the ARS MAGICA game is called "Storytelling," a clear indication that the emphasis on competition and gaming values of other fantasy role-playing games is less appropriate here. In "troupe-style play," the game requires a greater shared responsibility of players and GMs in the design and maintenance of the campaign world and narrative framework, blurring the typically distinct roles of player and GM. Players are expected to invest themselves in the story and setting, rather than take a narrow focus on the development of their personal PCs.

For starters, players are expected to assist in the cooperative design of their covenant—the home base of their characters. The rules provide cost mechanics for setting up a covenant, reflecting comparative qualities of defenses, relations with neighbors, lab and library facilities, and so on. The system insures that each covenant will have some weaknesses that may be exploited later as adventure elements.

The rest of the world is subsequently defined a bit at a time as characters leave the covenant on adventures. Each storyguide in turn presumably makes his own contribution to the setting as he presents a new scenario, with each successive scenario taking place farther and farther afield from the covenant. This is an original but doubtful scheme for creating a complete campaign setting, difficult enough for sophisticated gamers and completely implausible for beginners. The ideal of equally shared responsibility and creativity in designing a common campaign is an appealing objective, but it too glibly overlooks the effort and awkwardness of designing a world by committee. Elsewhere, we are given developed examples to clarify abstract principles, but here we get no model of a covenant and its locale, no map and key describing important features.

Player cooperation: The ARS MAGICA game is distinctive in emphasizing the welfare and integrity of the character group, story line, and campaign over the individual welfares and integrities of the PCs. I have always shared this emphasis and find this game much to my taste. This

THEY ARE COMING.

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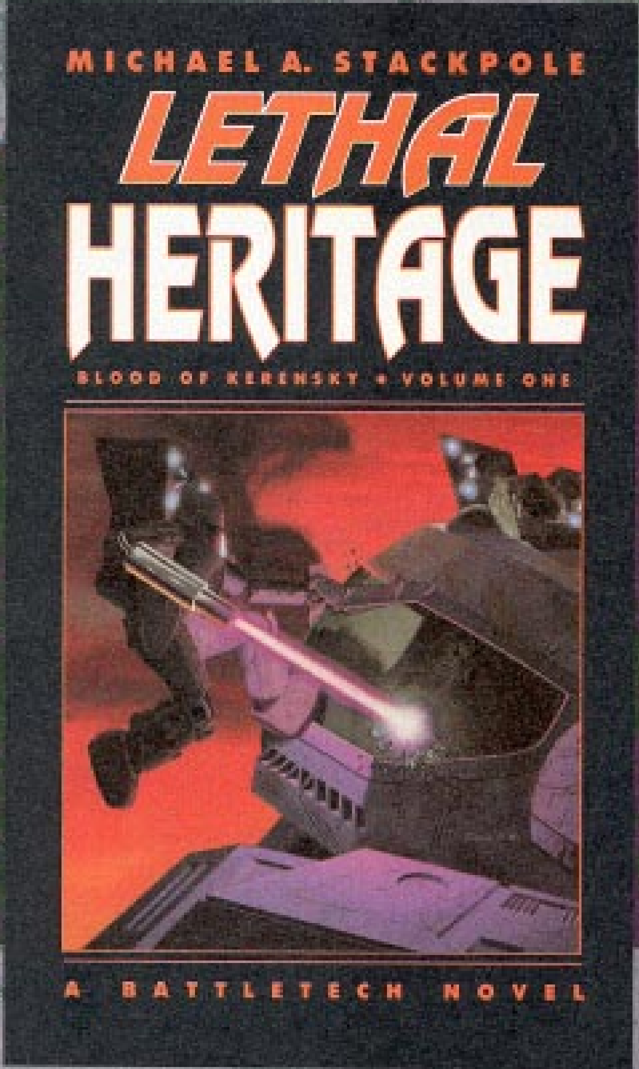

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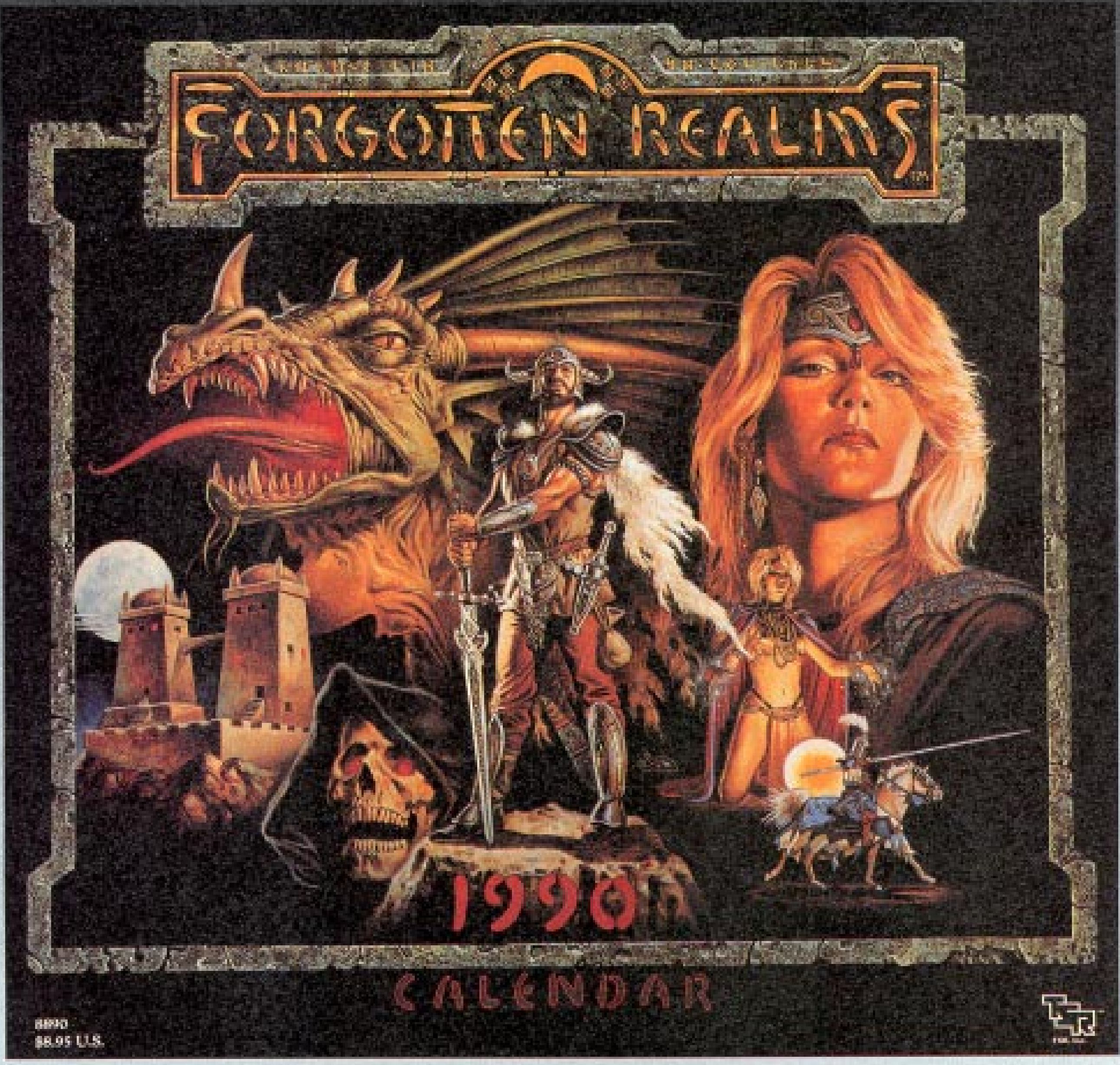

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is probably not an uncommon style of play in local game groups, but never before have I seen it expressed so explicitly in game rules. If you want a campaign that encourages this gaming style, the ARS MAGICA game provides an ideal system and setting.

The storyguide's craft: Seven main features are named for proper scenario design, and these are well chosen and explained. A list of 21 scenario ideas is provided. This feature is pretty commonplace in FRPG products nowadays and is becoming a bit hackneyed, but here the ideas are effective and evocative developments of the campaign setting. The simple scenario included involves the rescue of a faerie queen from dark powers, and it is a nice illustration of "big seven" scenario design.

Presentation: The text is abundant and fairly sophisticated, but well organized for reading and reference. Tables, notes, examples, lists, and asides are boxed for browsing and to break the material up into manageable packages. The quality of presentation is remarkable, especially for a small company's moderate-cost desk-top publishing system.

Evaluation: The ARS MAGICA game features an original and exciting game system, a coherent and satisfying treatment of magic, a convenient and imaginative exploitation of a historical medieval setting, and an explicit and appealing presentation of a role-playing style that emphasizes the common development of the setting, narrative, and PC-group activity over the personal expression of the individual PC. As a campaign, the ARS MAGICA game demands serious, dedicated, sophisticated gamers. As a source of ideas and inspiration for fantasy game systems, the development of magic in a fantasy campaign, and alternative role-playing game styles, it has a great deal to offer the casual browser or the serious student of FRPGs.

The Magister

Supplement for the AD&D® game and
FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting
64-page softbound book

TSR, Inc.	$7.95

Design: Ed Greenwood and Steve Perrin

And now something for the AD&D® game player. AD&D® game fantasy magic is anything but elegant in design, either in narrative or in gaming terms. Its various feeble attempts at providing a rationale for magic and spell-casting are adorably lame, and searching for logical, self-consistent principles in the varied mechanics and effects of spells and magical widgets is like hunting for snowballs in a volcano. However, if you cheerfully embrace the basic conventions of AD&D® game magic, with memorized spell formulae and cartons of magical devices spontaneously produced deep in the earth by mysterious geological principles, it offers ample entertainment for the heroic-fantasy gamer.

The Magister is a superior treatment of AD&D® game magic at its best. The spells and magical items are presented specifically for use in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, an official TSR® campaign world well developed in numerous supplements and above average in substance and texture. Elminster, the venerable sage and scholarly voice of the FORGOTTEN REALMS®, is our host in the book, and he provides descriptive detail, and history, as well as game mechanics for the magic he presents. For those familiar with the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, the style of presentation in ***The Magister*** is similar to. that of the magical tomes of the boxed FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set—one of the best features of that product.

The new spells are imaginative and colorful, with neat twists on standard spell effects that promise to be useful in play without inflating or disrupting the balance of power established in the 1st Edition *Players Handbook* magic spells. How about *vipergout,* with which the mage *teleports* snakes to his mouth and vomits them forth like a John Carpenter science-fiction flick special effect? Or *synostodweorner,* which alters any spell cast into a healing spell—a big help in a tough spot, particularly for magic-users who don't get healing spells? Or *tome guardian,* a cute little creature summoned from the plane of elemental Fire and bound as a guardian for valued possessions—in this case, to guard magical tomes? The spells and spell descriptions are explicit and detailed, and the tomes that contain these spells are vividly described in appearance and history, effectively suggesting dramatic adventure settings and narratives.

The tone of the presentation is also appealing. For example, the designers acknowledge troubling inconsistencies implied in the presence of wizards from the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting (Bigby, Tenser, Ledmund, etc.) in the names of spells appearing in the Forgotten Realms. In the glib, shamelessly expedient spirit of rationalizing the illogical (one of the greatest challenges and amusements in the AD&D® game), the designers offer a number of simple "explanations" for these apparent inconsistencies.

Looking for some magical widgets to perk up those poor characters who can't cast spells? They're all here: armor, clothing, rings, wands, swords, and all the miscellaneous goodies of the classic AD&D® game campaign. They are provided with lore and function descriptions, generally with colorful little stories,. implying the heroic deeds and grand, mysterious histories of peoples, races, and kingdoms in the Forgotten Realms. The widgets are useful and are not simply handy power tools for popping open monsters. The tweaking of game effects and advantages is subtle and imaginative. For example, one magical shield confers no bonuses in combat, but affects magical items (typically the ubiquitous magical swords and other annoying plus-something-or-other weapons) that come in contact with it by draining charges, by temporarily negating the item's magic, by setting the attacking item against its wielder, or by draining its powers forever (a handy way to suck generously distributed magical swords out of your campaign).

The section on creating magical items is short but offers some interesting rationalizations and elaborations of the standard rules for item creation. The ideas are faithful to the basic rules, with some useful original interpretations of the limits of the powers of certain items. For example, a rationale for the process of creating an intelligent sword is offered, with the implication that a spirit must be summoned to be placed in the sword (chaotic-evil characters can just sacrifice someone to produce the spirit), or that a caster can put his own intelligence (or that of a volunteer or faithful pet) into the device.

Evaluation: ***The Magister*** is a good example of the best that AD&D® game magic can produce. The virtues are mostly in the trappings—the descriptive bits, the colorful effects, and the histories and legends attached to the spells and items. I recommend it to gamers who'd like to punch up the style and texture of the magic in their AD&D® campaigns.

Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide

Supplement for the TALISLANTA® game
102-page softbound book

Bard Games	$12.00

Design: Stephan Michael Sechi

My first scan almost let me dismiss this interesting supplement as an imaginative, pretty, but awkward and unsophisticated jumble of high-fantasy magic ideas. At first glance the evocative illustrations of creatures; wizards, and supernatural beings make a good impression, but on closer examination, the organization and presentation are much less smooth and coherent here than in the GURPS® Magic or ARS MAGICA games, or in ***The Magister.*** The plethora of lists, charts, and brief descriptions of magic spells, devices, and creatures reminded me of game supplements from the early days of FRPGs. The undetailed floor and city maps with brief description keys were unimpressive, and the adventure and scenario ideas were brief, common, and unexciting. The material clearly had sharp tone and epic grandeur—but the scale was so broad that the treatments often lacked the fine detail of the three supplements discussed earlier. Often, I felt that if the designer had just taken a few of the topics and developed them in more detail, the book would be much more effective.

Take, for example, "The Lyceum Arcanum," the opening piece in the book, a description of the courses, faculty, and physical plant of a Talislantan university of magic. The conflicts in tone between contemporary notions of higher educational institutions and high-fantasy magical trappings are a bit jarring. The room keys are short and textureless. Though some background and descriptive detail are provided—for example, course offerings and faculty thumbnail sketches—there's no clear sense of how that detail might be worked into session or campaign play.

Nonetheless, I think this is a useful and even inspiring collection of ideas for FRPG GMs looking to expand the tone and elegance of their fantasy campaigns. In many ways, the awkward features of the *Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide* will be familiar and comfortable to veteran D&D® game players, and might be regarded as an opportunity and virtue more than a liability. The GURPS® Magic and ARS MAGICA game systems are elegant and coherent; as such, however, they are less-readily dismantled and scavenged for use in home campaigns without adopting the systems they are designed around. *Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide* is more effective as an open-ended menu of ideas for the GM to develop in his own campaign. And the guide's style of FRPG magic spells and magical items is perfectly compatible with the cheerful, incoherent potpourri of magical effects found in the D&D® and AD&D® games.

There are plenty of ideas to work with here. Many of the spells and magical items are distinctive and imaginative. For example, here's a tasty variation on the concept of invisibility—Cascal's Shadow Dimension. The caster steps into a shadow, opens a little Shadow Dimension, and enters it. From within the small Shadow Dimension, the caster can look out at his surroundings, but he cannot be seen or felt since he is not really there. And the three microcultures introduced have a nice feel and heroic charm: the Ariane mystics, who record their sense impressions for posterity in magical tamar stones; the Mandalan mystic warriors, who elevate passive resistance to an effective political perspective and a high martial art; and the decadent Phantasians, whose cloud cities and windships are the fabulous remnants of a Golden Age's high magical technology. A short story at the end of the volume is perhaps the most persuasive hint of the guide's potential. Read it first for a sense of how the book's materials might flower in a developed scenario setting.

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Evaluation: The virtues of the *Talislanta Sorcerer's Guide* are not as sophisticated and polished as the other products reviewed in this column, but the quantity and quality of high-fantasy ideas here are noteworthy. Though not a first-class model of FRPG presentation or campaign development, as a sourcebook of ideas for high-fantasy campaigns, particularly of the D&D® and AD&D® game varieties, this book may be quite satisfying.

[Other TALISLANTA game system books are discussed in "Role-playing Reviews" in DRAGON® issue #143.]

The Spell Book

Supplement for the FANTASY HERO™ game
96-page softbound book
Iron Crown Enterprises $10.00
Design: Aaron Allston and Mike Nystul

This is perhaps more a notice of publication than a review, in that I haven't carefully studied the FANTASY HERO™ system, much less expended the time and energy required to design and run a campaign using a system so fond of number-juggling. However, if you are a superhero role-playing gamer, you probably know about the CHAMPIONS™ game system, upon which the FANTASY HERO™ system is based. A fair number of very good, very sophisticated gamers are quite fond of the CHAMPIONS™ system and, by extension, the FANTASY HERO™ system. In the past, the complete absence of supplements and support has made the FANTASY HERO™ system pretty much a dead issue, but with Iron Crown's decision to publish their own fantasy-campaign supplements designed for the ROLEMASTER™ and FANTASY HERO™ systems, and with the publication of *The Spell Book,* the FANTASY HERO™ game may become a more plausible choice for a small but dedicated audience of FRPG players.

I admire the candid tone of the designers in acknowledging the frustration potential of FANTASY HERO™ magic. "All right. I admit it. FH magic may be the most flexible system currently available, but at times it can be downright frustrating." "The magic system in FH is highly complex and fragile when it comes to balance!" "Juggling the various elements of an open-ended system (like FANTASY HERO™) can be difficult for experienced Gamemasters, let alone newcomers who may be confused by the sheer bulk of the material!'

Why would anyone find such a system attractive? Apparently the FANTASY HERO game draws the sort of gamer who has very high expectations for game systems, who expects logical limits to the power of magic, who desires internal logic in the magic mechanics, and who prefers a balance between power expended to produce an effect and the scale of the effect. Not surprisingly, reducing fantasy magic to a logical game system is a tall order, but it's what FANTASY HERO game players seem to be hoping for. And those players and the game's designers apparently. care about their game system. Essays and rules alterations in the ***The Spell Book*** give abundant evidence of dedication to amending flaws in the original magic system.

Personally, I am not a system hacker. I am more concerned with narrative, conflict, theme, and character than with the gaming aspects of FRPGs. However, I have ample respect for system fussing as a form of solitaire or talk-gaming. It's certainly no more dopey than painting lead miniatures or whipping up dozens of characters or tinkering endlessly with scenario and campaign backgrounds. If you are an inveterate system tinker, the FANTASY HERO game (and particularly its magic) probably has the most detailed and articulated system tools available.

About the first third of the book is dedicated to rules amendments, corrections, additions, and a discussion of the necessary elements to consider in designing FANTASY HERO magic for your fantasy campaign. The GM advice is lucid but too generic to be very exciting. I'll bet the step-by-step procedures for organizing the design of a FANTASY HERO magic system, complete with a handy design worksheet, will be a big help to a GM already sold on the game.

The 78 spells included are not designed as a coherent set of spells for use in a particular campaign, but as examples of the types of spells you might encounter in a variety of campaigns. The spell effects themselves are not particularly inspirational nor any more colorful than most D&D® game magic effects, and are much less distinctive than ***The Magister*** materials. Also provided is a magical secret society for PC spell-casters, the Kalen, which is not particularly well developed in a narrative sense. The blandness of the material is probably a result of the generic constraints of the system, since in ***The Spell Book,*** the mechanics and game systems are the main focus, not the stories, characters, settings, or themes of fantasy.

Evaluation: If you play the FANTASY HERO™ system, this is a must buy. If you like the CHAMPIONS™ game and want a compatible fantasy system, you might take a look at this supplement and the FANTASY HERO™ game. ***The Spell Book*** won't be particularly interesting or useful as a sourcebook for FRPG gamers who use other systems. Ω

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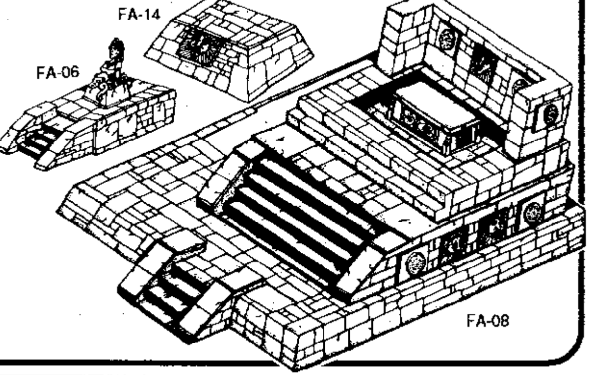

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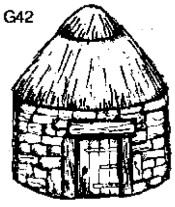

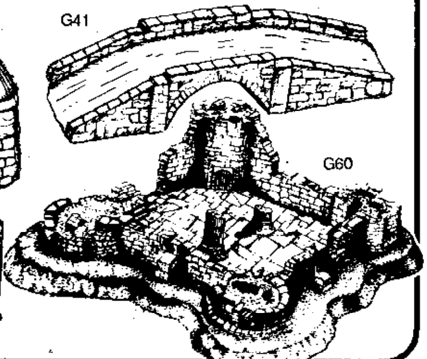

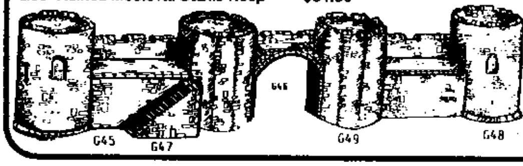

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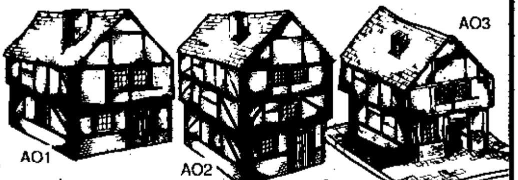

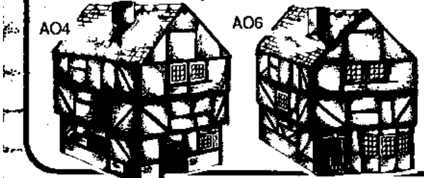

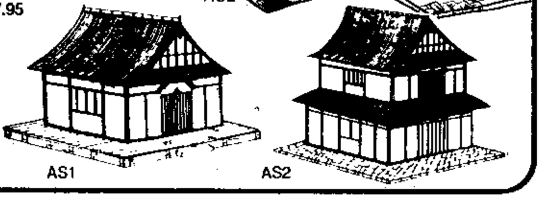

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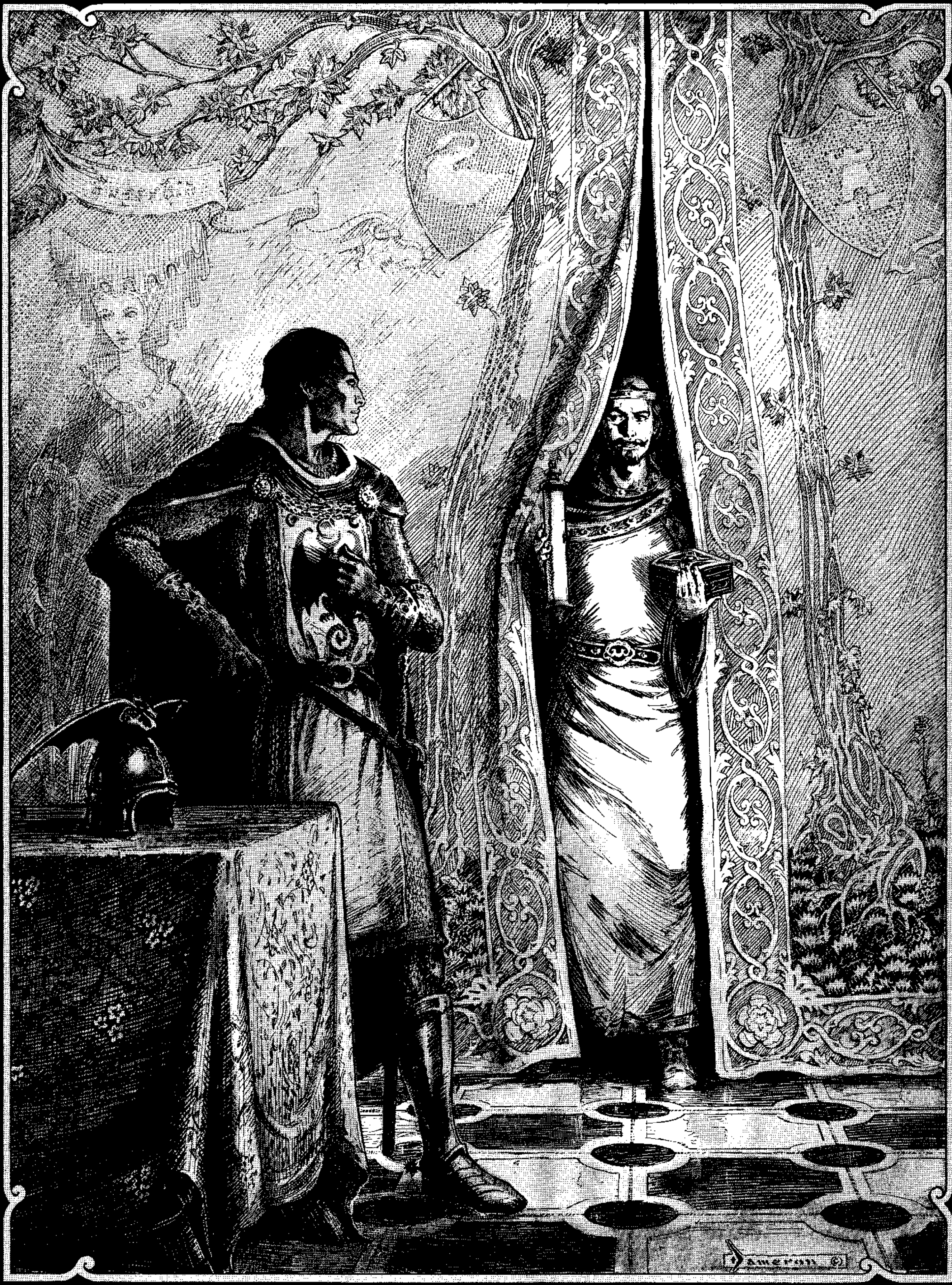
Cameron

Lord of the Keep

by Brenda K. Ward

The kestral gave out a loud cry of fear. Tiyaron looked up from his studies in time to see the small falcon, suddenly wild, disappear through the open window.

Tiyaron shuddered as he gazed at the empty perch, then moistened his dry lips. Absently, he closed the forgotten book and sat for a long time in deep thought.

“Give it back, Drace. It’s mine.”

“Is it?” Drace asked the youth as he slipped the jeweled dagger into his belt. “I killed more men yesterday than you even looked at. How did you get this knife? Were you robbing the dead when you should have been fighting?”

“I won it in battle fairly,” answered Skal.

Drace smiled. “Then you should be able to defend it. I challenge your right to this battle-claim.”

Skal paled. He glanced around for support, but the fighters near enough to hear the exchange were either polishing their gear or watching in neutral silence. He looked back at Drace. The warrior’s youthful, unscarred face belied his skill and experience in dueling or battle. Skal hesitated, then shook his head. “I won’t fight one of the duke’s elite guard.”

“A wise choice.” Drace bowed. He strode off in an arrogant jaunt.

“May I see the dagger, Drace?”

Drace halted, turning around as Tiyaron stepped out from between two tents. “‘It’s no business of yours, wizard.”

“I did not say it was. May I see the dagger, please?”

Drace studied Tiyaron a moment, pulled the blade out of his belt, and handed it over. “The battle is over and the duke has other wizards. If you challenge me now, it will set you out of the duke’s protection,” he said.

Tiyaron examined the dagger without comment. The hilt was ornately crafted. He could feel the slight power of the small ruby that governed it—a prize young Skal would cherish but which Drace would toss away when he found something better. Tiyaron handed it back.

“Having what is not yours will not make you happy. It will interfere with your other pleasures as well. I suggest that you give it up to its rightful owner.”

Drace touched his sword, giving Tiyaron the same smile he had shown Skal.

“Is that a threat?”

“I do not threaten.” Tiyaron turned his back and walked off between the tents.

That night Tiyaron roused from his sleep. He felt that someone had been nearby. Closing his eyes, Tiyaron searched his room, nodding in satisfaction as he raised his hand to remove the dagger that had been plunged into the bedding just inches from his throat.

He muttered a brief phrase. The blade glowed faintly for a moment. He would return it to Skal in the morning and see the duke about the journey ahead.

Before he fell back asleep, Tiyaron’s mind wandered out to the tents of the camp followers. He felt one trembling in the dark, shaking over the threats and the blow Drace had given her to keep silent about the night’s failed

Illustrations by Ned Dameron

pursuits. The wizard bade her forget what had happened and sleep well. He rolled over to do the same.

"May your death be a long and agonizing one," snarled Drace as Tiyaron re-entered the cave. "I curse you. I curse the day of your birth. And I curse these mountains you brought me to."

Tiyaron paused in his task of adding the damp sticks to, the fire. No wandering spirit honored the warrior's outburst, and Drace had not appealed to any god.

Tiyaron finished his task without replying. He took off his rain-drenched cloak and spread it over a large rock to dry. The sticks he had gathered sputtered and hissed, eventually catching fire.

Outside, the rain continued at its furious pace. Their horses and the pack animal huddled together just inside the mouth of the shallow cavern but away from the now-blazing fire. Drace refused to be lulled by its cheery warmth. He continued to glare at Tiyaron.

"By the duke's command I go with you, but each moment the urge grows to kill you and seek service elsewhere. Why are we here?" he demanded.

"My uncle is dead," said Tiyaron, gathering supplies to make a poultice. "I go to claim Avenly's keep. I asked the duke for your services as escort."

"There have been no messengers from the west. How do you know he's dead?"

Tiyaron watched the flickering of the fire. The kestrel's sudden, frantic cry tore through his mind again. He shuddered. "I know."

"You always seem to know, eh, wizard?" sneered Drace.

Tiyaron did not reply.

"Why me?"

"You are the best. Also, I hope this journey will end the enmity between us."

"How?"

"My uncle had a skilled knife, much like the one you coveted but more suited to battle. Help me gain possession of the tower and the knife is yours."

Drace considered this. "The knife is there?"

"Yes."

"How many stones govern it?"

"Three. Emeralds."

"Em—" Drace paused to control his surprise. His sword hand twitched. "Just how much more trouble do you expect in claiming this keep if it falls to you by right?"

"My uncle safeguarded his home well, but I believe I can handle any remaining magics. Your concern will lie with conserving my energy on the journey." Tiyaron soaked a long strip of cloth in the poultice before carrying the bowl over to Drace. "Let me check your wound."

Drace pulled down the blanket that covered him as Tiyaron knelt to examine him. The gashes across Drace's chest were long but not deep. There was no sign of infection.

"It's healing well."

"You knew that bandit was using magic."

"I knew you could handle him. Had there been any real need, I would have intervened," answered Tiyaron. "I'll change your dressing."

Drace caught Tiyaron's wrist tightly. "I'll not be scarred because of service to you. Heal this wound now," he demanded.

Tiyaron shook his head. "That can wait. I've explained to you why I cannot waste unnecessary effort. We will arrive at the keep tomorrow if the weather breaks. Afterward, I will speed up the healing of your wounds."

"You'll do it now," Drace repeated.

"Or?"

"To the hells with you and your tower. I won't fight for you until you heal this wound. So you had best hope another highwayman doesn't try to take shelter here."

"I see." Tiyaron paused, then nodded. "Let go of my arm. I'll do what I must."

He picked up the bowl. "Sleep now. Your wound will be healed by morning. I hope the journey is not delayed because of your vanity." Tiyaron murmured further sounds as he changed the dressing.

The torrent outside masked Drace's quiet snoring as Tiyaron prepared his bedding for the night. Before lying down, he considered the cave entrance. At last he made a palming gesture.

"Rock," he said softly.

Outside, the mountain's face presented a solid wall of stone to any nighttime passersby.

The sun had burned away most of the thick morning haze, but the air was still cold and damp as the pair reached the edge of a large clearing. Tiyaron gestured upward toward the far end of the high meadow, where another sheer cliff rose sharply upward.

"Avenly's keep," he announced.

Drace took a long, hard look at the broken pile of stones that might once have been a goatherd's cot.

"You call that pile of rubble a keep?" he asked angrily. "What trick is this?"

Tiyaron regarded him for a moment, then touched the pendant that hung from a silver chain around his neck. Drace reined his mount backward, drawing his sword, but Tiyaron nodded past him.

"Look again."

Sword still raised, Drace looked back and gasped. Behind the broken stone hovel, nestled against the cliff face, stood a large tower of gleaming black stone. Drace's arm dropped as he gazed at the intricately worked battlements.

"No human hand made that tower," he said in a low tone.

"Not by usual methods, perhaps. But my uncle was human enough."

"Wizard-work, nonetheless," said Drace. "What did you do to my eyes?"

"My own strength is vested here in this tower, as was my uncle's," explained Tiyaron as they made their way toward the keep. "The exterior illusion was my own creation, so no effort was needed to permit you to see through it. I will need all my strength today to dispel what remains of my uncle's protective magics."

"Understood."

"It will take some time before the keep is ready to have the new lordship assumed. Then I will be able to show you powers and riches your duke has only dreamed of. Stay here until I require your assistance."

Drace watched as Tiyaron closed his eyes and held out his hands before the massive oaken doors. After a long interval, the wizard reached for one of the large metal handles. With a creaking that sent deep shivers through both of them, the door slowly opened.

The sun had climbed much higher in the sky when Tiyaron reappeared. He was sweaty and visibly drained. "Come."

Tiyaron led the way through an intricate maze of stairs and well-furnished rooms to the third floor. They stopped in a large chamber at the base of another stairway leading to the uppermost level of the tower. Several large, ornate tapestries hung in the room. As with the other rooms they had traveled through, the hangings and furniture were free of dust or wear.

Tiyaron pushed aside one of the wall hangings to reveal a small doorway. He fingered a lever above the right lintel post. The door slid sideways into the wall.

"There is no way to leave this room from the inside," Tiyaron warned, motioning toward the revealed entryway and the darkness beyond." "Don't let the door close before I return."

He reappeared after a few moments, carrying a rolled parchment and a small chest. "I have them."

"Have what?"

The skilled dagger that I promised you for your efforts," answered Tiyaron as he set the box and scroll down on a nearby table. "And the deed of ownership that will permit me to give it to you."

"How so?"

Tiyaron pulled a key out of his belt pouch. "Stay here until I come down. This key unlocks the room at the top of the stairs. The scroll must be properly unsealed up in that room or this whole tower, which has stood here for over half a millenium, will come crashing down."

Drace nodded. "Shouldn't you rest first? You look too weary to do any more magic."

the power needed now is in the scroll, not in me."

"Is that so?" Drace laughed sharply.

Tiyaron whirled at the mocking sound. He was pushed up against the wall as the edge of Drace's sword pressed against his throat.

"You have no right!"

"No? Listen well, wizard," snarled Drace, picking up the scroll and fondling it with his free hand. "No one bests me in battle or cunning. For your interference in my life, I take as battle-claim the knife, this keep, and your power.

"You said earlier," he continued, pressing the sword closer to silence Tiyaron's protest, "that your power is vested here. If I opened this scroll incorrectly, will that power survive?"

Tiyaron closed his eyes. "No, it will not," he said.

'Then advise me on what I need to know to become lord of this keep. When I succeed, you will have your life, along with your power, as long as you never again use it against me."

Tiyaron hesitated, paling as Drace fingered the scroll's seal. "When you get upstairs, lock the room behind you and open the window. Turn the small sand timer over and sit on the round stone hearth. Then break the seal on the scroll. You will not be able to move until the sand runs out. When it does, you will be the acknowledged lord of the keep."

"Give me the key."

When Tiyaron had obeyed, Drace gestured toward the small side room. "In there. Is that everything?"

"Yes."

Drace's response was to slide the door shut, leaving Tiyaron in darkness.

Tiyaron stepped out as the door opened, blinking as he entered the main room. For a moment he studied the familiar mocking eyes.

"I trust you haven't been too inconvenienced."

"No, sir." Tiyaron shook his head. He reached out to stroke the young kestrel perched on the other's protected forearm. "I'm surprised you came downstairs this soon. How do you feel?"

"Very good, all things considered."

"So what happened?"

"Would you believe I drowned?"

"Oh?"

"I was journeying up north, so far that snow covers the ground nine months out of the year. I received a commission to see if certain lights were a magical or natural phenomenon. The ship we were on was struck by a sheet of ice that was mostly hidden under the water. As the lights turned out to be a natural effect, I don't think we were sabotaged."

The keep's master transferred the bird to a nearby perch before examining himself in a hall mirror. "Young. Good strength. Fairly attractive. Excellent choice, Tiyaron. Who am I?"

"One who was disliked by many and will be missed by none. He urgently demanded the right to become lord of this keep." Tiyaron gave a wry smile.

"So he has." Avenly reflected Tiyaron's smile, then frowned as he glanced at the room his nephew had been confined in. "Personally, I find it less trouble to travel with those who are not my enemies."

Tiyaron shrugged, though his eyes twinkled. "For myself, Uncle, I prefer the ancient piece of wisdom which teaches that the best way to destroy an enemy is to turn him into a friend." Ω

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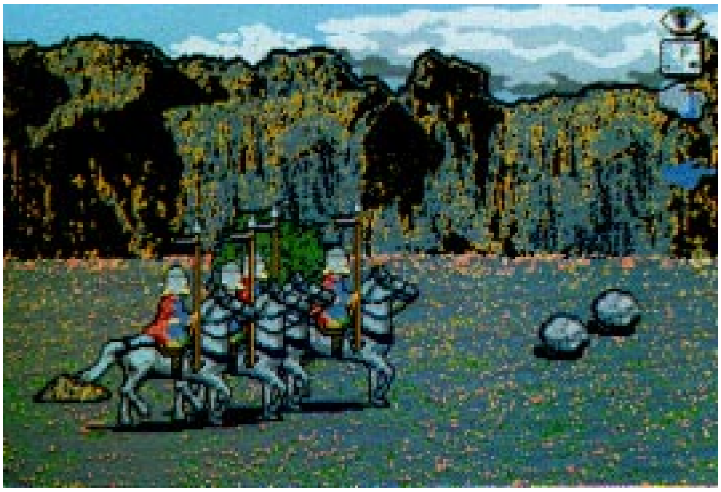
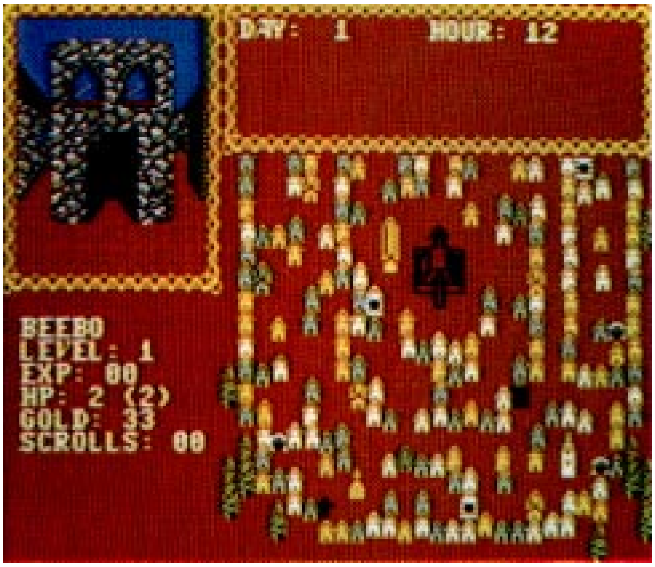
From hobbits to Hillsfar



War *in Middle-earth:* It's a long walk to Mount Doom.



DAY: 1 HOUR: 12

BEEBO
LEVEL: 1
EXP: 00
HP: 2 (2)
GOLD: 33
SCROLLS: 00

Hillsfar: Life is hard (but exciting) at 1st level.

Computer-game ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Melbourne House
711 West 17th Street, Unit G9
Costa Mesa CA 92627
(714)631-1001

J. R. R. Tolkien's War in Middle-earth ***
Commodore Amiga version $49.99

Until we played this game, we thought it impossible to bring the breadth and scope of Tolkien's Middle-earth adventures to the personal computer. But Robert Clardy and his talented associates at Synergistic have brought to life the leading characters from ***The Hobbit*** and ***The Lord of the Rings*** on the Commodore Amiga and PC/MS-DOS microcomputers. The adventure required five years to create, and its graphic presentation is superb.

Your goal is to direct Frodo Baggins and his friends to Mount Doom, where Frodo must cast the One Ring into the fires to destroy it. Against you are all the forces of the corrupt wizard Saruman and the Dark Lord Sauron. On your side are the forces of good, which must be motivated into global action against the forces of evil. With over 80 on-screen animated characters and a map that scrolls through 36 screens, this program sets a task before you that seems insurmountable, just as the task did for young Frodo in Tolkien's classic adventure trilogy.

Yes, it does help to have read Professor Tolkien's work before you play this game Many of today's fantasy adventure gamers (myself included) were introduced to the world of fantasy through Tolkien's work and have never lost their delight at the substantial world he created. Melbourne House has released an adventure that rings true; despite its lack of constant action, the game should become an example of how to convert a classic work of adventure fiction to a microcomputer environment.

This adventure game is far different from its competitors. First of all, there are three levels of play. The first is the full map level, which offers you an overview of all Middle-earth on which your major forces are revealed. On this level, you can use the scroll icon (or the letter A on the keyboard) to save and restore games.

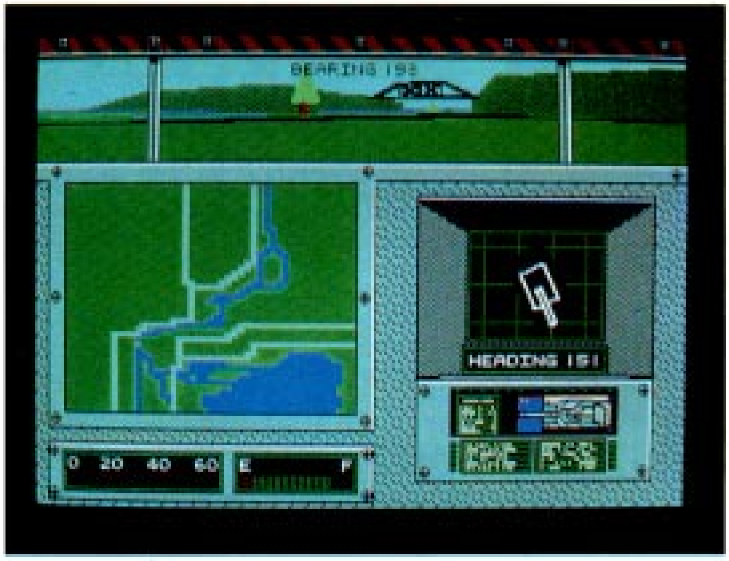
The second level is known as the campaign level, and it is here that most of the action takes place. More detail is shown on-screen, and you can move about by scrolling the map. Orders for a character's or division's movements are given at this level. For example, when the adventure begins in the Shire, Frodo and his companions are walking eastward toward Rivendell. In our game, we changed Frodo's direction to the southwest, toward Tom Bombadil's home, just as the Nazgûl were closing in upon Hobbiton and had the Old Forest Road to Rivendell pretty well covered. Frodo has got to avoid the Nazgûl at all costs, for if he doesn't reach Rivendell, he won't obtain the help he needs to reach Mordor and Mount Doom to destroy the One Ring.

Other icons present at this level are the magnifying glass (M), which takes you down to the third level, and the hour glass (T), which allows you to change the pace of the game. We recommend dropping the speed when learning how to play the game and when you are about to encounter an individual or locale. Otherwise, the action moves far too quickly for adequate comprehension.

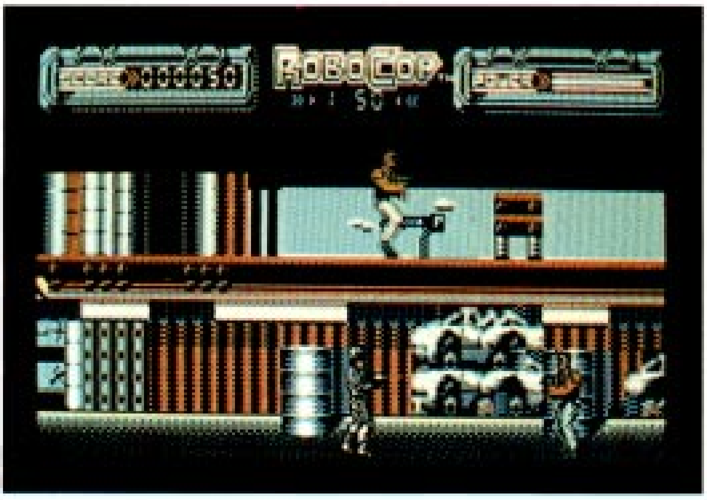
At the third (animation) level, the characters are fully animated and individual orders can be issued to each. Command icons on this level include the eye, the map, and provisions. Again, each icon has a keyboard equivalent (in this case the letter S, U, and O respectively). The eye icon gives you each character's status. The map icon takes you from the animation level to the campaign level. If you access the eye icon at the second level, you get information on the status of an individual character or a force. The provisions icon allows your selected character to put down take up, or use an object. This icon comes in handy to manipulate the goodies you find in the adventure.

We enjoyed the animation level, even though it is a slow method by which to play this enormous tale. As you watch your characters move toward their destination, you see them set up camp, start a fire, sleep, talk, and move around. When your characters encounter others, the strangers may simply pass by. Sometimes, however, a window opens on the screen and the program asks you for a decision, When you talk to someone, remember to have pen or pencil in hand and write quickly. The word balloons don't remain on screen very long, and trying to pause the game during a conversation with an NPC only loses the conversation,

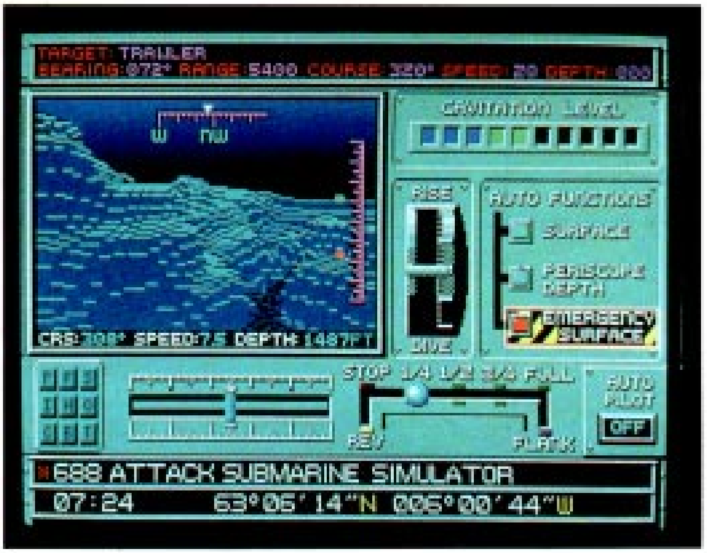
Combat is of critical importance, especially because hobbits are terrible combatants. Frodo will likely become so scared that he puts the One Ring on his finger (thereby becoming invisible), and that act draws more Nazgûl than honey draws flies. Other hobbits in the party will probably die in the confrontation. On one of our initial travels to Rivendell, we wandered northeast through a forest and happened to come upon two trolls. While the ranger Aragorn took care of one of the nasties, the second troll dispatched the entire



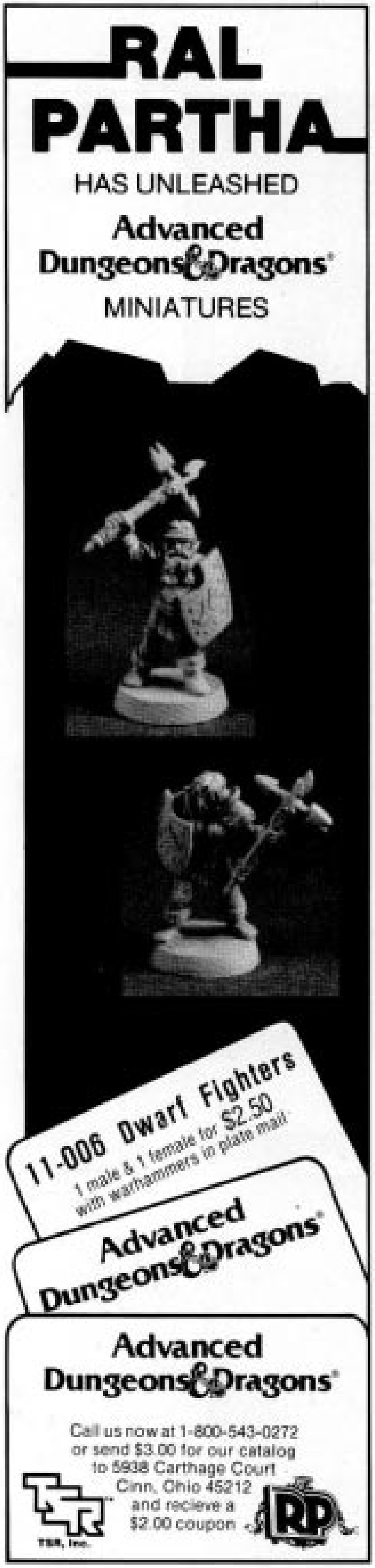
Abrams Battle Tank: Say it with sabot rounds.



RoboCop: Stamp out crime in a very direct way.



688 Attack Sub: You either stop World War III or you finish it.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party except for the invisible Frodo. With Aragorn and his companions deceased, it was difficult for Frodo to make it to Rivendell. Eventually he did, but not without some wolves and more trolls filling his exhausting journey with terror.

Let's not forget that, even though you are most concerned with Frodo and his party getting to Mount Doom, there are other forces of good throughout Middle-earth that must be assembled to confront the evil forces of Sauron. Should any three of the good strongholds fall to the evil forces, the game is lost, even if the One Ring has been destroyed.

You must assemble the armies of good from the very start of the game and send them to areas where they can halt the flood of evil. As the hint book included in the game suggests, Helm's Deep and Minas Tirith should be fortified with your southernmost forces to await the arrival of reinforcements from the north. Or you might want to mass all of your forces to break through the gates of Mordor. The game can follow the story line of Tolkien's books, but only if you want it to. There are several turns you can take to destroy Sauron and Saruman. But please remember, Frodo had many close calls in the books and will probably have many more while you are learning to play ***War in Middle-earth.***

This adventure is going to require hours of your time to complete. That's good. The fact that you can save adventures in progress is also good. However, if you remain at the animation level for all of your steps, or remain at the normal speed level, you could become bored waiting for something to happen. Keep in mind that in order to activate some of the other forces of good, other quests must be completed. For example, to mobilize the riders of the Mark, you must present King Theoden of Rohan with the Red Arrow. When the Sceptre of Annuminas is presented to the Gondorians, they too will mobilize. Those notes you've been taking during encounters become crucial links to finding these necessary items. These major events should be accomplished early in the game, or you'll find these side adventures hampered by the forces of evil that seek the Ring Bearer.

Becoming accustomed to the game's interface does require some time. This results in several game restarts, because while you're fumbling for the appropriate icon or key, the action continues. In combat on the PC/MS-DOS version, we couldn't highlight the appropriate action box quickly enough with the joystick to prevent a character from dying. Also, if you try to engage in an action during an encounter at the campaign level, all you'll see is the decision window flash quickly-then disappear. That encounter has now been lost, and it could have been a critical meeting.

Overall, ***War in Middle-earth*** is a lion-hearted attempt to bring one of the finest fantasy adventures to microcomputers. With a smoother and faster interface, this game could become a classic. As it stands now, the game is bound to win the respect of Tolkien fans, adventure gamers, who enjoy enormous adventures, and those who have a high tolerance for waiting while ordered actions are completed. The fully detailed fold-out map of Middle-earth is a marvelous addition to the game and allows you to plot your actions without constantly moving from level to level' in the game itself. Of the versions we have played, we preferred the Commodore Amiga format.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
(distributed by Electronic Arts)
1046 North Rengstorff Avenue
Mountain View CA 94043
(415) 964-1353

Hillsfar ***

Commodore 64/128 version $39.95

This game is ***not*** the sequel to SSI's ***Pool of Radiance*** AD&D® fantasy role-playing adventure. For those who wish to venture beyond the environs of Phlan, the sequel adventure is ***Azure Bonds,*** which will be released during the summer of this year. ***Hillsfar*** is a value-added adventure for those who would like to take a side trip while awaiting the sequel.

You can import your ***Pool of Radiance*** characters into the ***Hillsfar*** adventure, but they are reduced to their basic levels and retain none of their weapons or magical items. You can also create original ***Hillsfar*** characters, but you can't export them to ***Pool of Radiance.*** You will be able to export your ***Hillsfar*** characters to ***Azure Bonds.***

His Excellency, the First Lord of Hillsfar, doesn't appreciate competition. This merchant-mage, the self-proclaimed ruler of the town (his real name is Maalthiir), makes certain that his guards bully those who don't obey his rules. And the consequences of disobedience can be quite bruising, because Hillsfar possesses an arena where alleged criminals must fight for their freedom. Those who are simply sports minded can also enter the arena to fight for fame and fortune.

Hillsfar is known as the Jewel of the Moonsea. Those of you who enjoy a bit of thieving must note that there are numerous treasure chests to be picked within Hillsfar. The trouble is, you've got to succeed within a certain amount of time. Fail, and the lord's guards aren't far behind!

All manner of niceties can be found within the chests, ranging from magical items to gold pieces. Remember, however, that your weaponless and magicless state requires you to survive on your wits. You'll find adventure in guilds spread about the city, the numerous pubs, the archery range, the cemetery, the haunted mansion, and even the sewers. You can even enter Maalthiir's castle and see what you can get away with—literally!

We reviewed the Commodore 64/128 version and found the detailed, 3-D graphics well done. When you enter a room, you view your actions from the top down. Even though there are times when you'd like to map a certain area, there usually isn't time to do so, as the time indicator is rapidly shrinking, and the guards aren't far behind. All activity occurs in real time. You must also have a save-game disk prepared in advance so that you can save your character throughout the adventure. In order to save the game, you must return to Hillsfar's stables and ride back to your camp. This can be frustrating, especially after having a particularly enriching experience in town.

To begin the adventure, you must ride a horse from your encampment to the city gates. Learning to ride a horse is certainly not a difficult chore, but you'll take a few spills learning how to manipulate your joystick to make the horse jump, duck, slow down, and speed up.

We highly recommend that you take your time and check out the city. A map is included on screen as well as on the back cover of the user's manual. There are 18 buildings of note within Hillsfar. Some buildings are numbered, and as you find out what each building contains, you can write its description on the manual cover. Hunt for the pubs and guilds first, as they are quite handy. The latter are especially useful, for you can rest inside these buildings and regain your health.

You must also acquire the skill of lock-picking. If you are of the thief class or have hired an NPC thief, you have a better chance to open locked treasure. When you find something that needs to be unlocked, you are shown the lock on screen along with a selection of lockpicks. You must select the lockpick which most closely matches the tumbler of the lock. Some locks have few tumblers, others have more. Each tumbler must open in sequence, from left to right. Don't forget that time is quickly passing. If you choose the wrong pick, you'll probably break it. And, should you put the wrong pick into a trapped lock, we'll bet you spring the trap!

There are other ways to open locks, such as using a ***knock ring*** that can open one lock. Or, you may locate the ***chime of opening,*** which makes all the tumblers open through its magical properties. You can even try to open a lock by force.

Hillsfar is not an in-depth adventure, nor is it as absorbing as ***Pool of Radiance. Hillsfar*** is a nice adventure to while away the hours while waiting for SSI to release ***Azure Bonds.*** If you enjoyed ***Pool of Radiance,*** you'll like ***Hillsfar,*** and we recommend this adventure's purchase for those who enjoy diversionary quests.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Abrams Battle Tank ***

MS-DOS version $39.95

Tank warfare: Is there anything as thrilling, especially when the blazing of cannon is managed on a computer screen and places the tank commander in no danger of injury? Electronic Arts has released a well-conceived M1A1 tank simulation called ***Abrams Battle Tank.*** Designed by Damon Slye and David McClurg of Dynamix, this offering is for PC/MS-DOS machines and arrives on one 3½" or two 5¼" disks. The game has an install program that automatically copies the necessary files to your PC's hard disk. With full support for CGA, HGC, and EGA graphics, this tank combat simulator runs on most IBM micros or compatibles and offers a 3-D view of the battlefield and opponents. The one area in which ***Abrams Battle Tank*** is disappointing is the sound accompaniment, but that's the fault of the computer system, not the programmers.

The first of four operations stations is the gunner station, which is accessed using the Fl key. Here you can align the turret, toggle control between the tank hull and the turret, lock on target, fire the machine gun, and turn on the thermal imaging. Additionally, while in gunner status, you can zoom in or out (1 X, 3 X, 10 X) on targets and ready one of three types of rounds for firing. The HEAT round, with a range of up to 2,000 meters, is particularly effective against tank barriers and infantry units as well as armor, but shouldn't be used against the Russian choppers The AX ammunition is more appropriate for use against flying machines and is considered an experimental, antihelicopter round. You can also use the AX against other targets, but it takes a bit more time to load this shell than the other two types. However, the AX also has a range of 770-4,000 meters, making it a powerful weapon. The final round is the sabot, an armor-piercing shell with a range of 2,500 meters. Don't use this round against infantry or aircraft.

With the full-panel view of each station, the gunner's station uses numeric keys 1, 2, or 3 to load your desired round. By pressing the space bar (or the fire button, if using the joystick), the round is ejected from the 120mm Rheinmetall Cannon. With full battle view from the turret, you use gun sights to bear on your target. By pressing the L key, you lock on the target; by pressing RETURN at the same time, you can cycle through the available targets until you pick one for your strike. This is called the TAD (Target Acquisition Device) box. Other gauges in the gunner's station include a targeting readout in meters, the target's identification number, a speedometer for your tank, the engine temperature gauge, and smoke discharger. On the range gauge, the color of the distance readout also indicates the probability of a hit by your selected round. When the number turned red (in EGA mode), we

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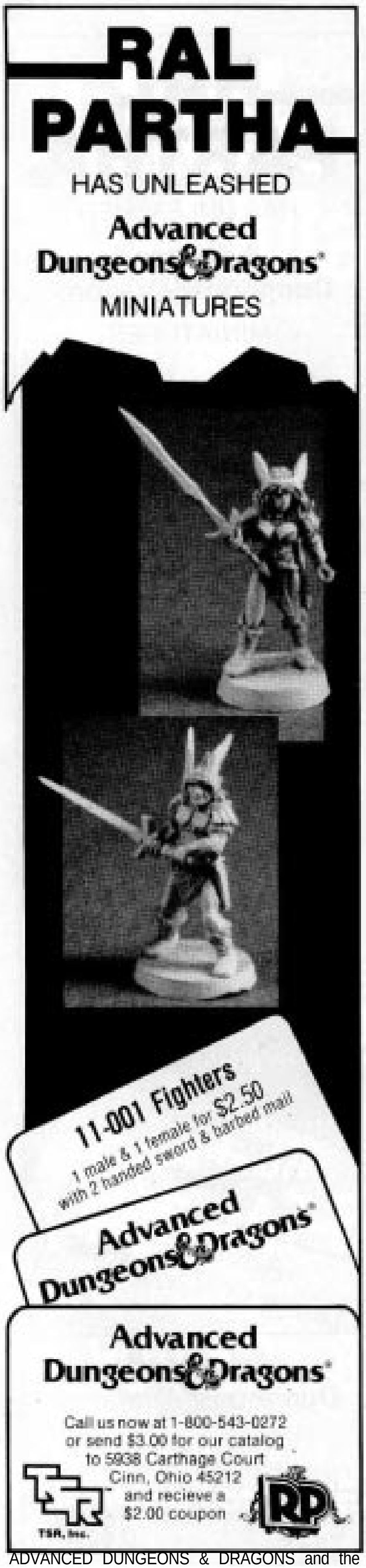

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knew we had a 75% or greater chance of hitting the target. When we maneuvered closer to the target, the enemy's targeting also improved. We sustained some damage before deciding that, in some circumstances, firing while at the yellow or green range (50% or less probability to hit) gave us acceptable percentages with less damage to our Abrams.

The next station is the tank commander's station, accessed via the F2 key. Here, you have a complete view of the battlefield and can pan 360° by revolving either the tank or the turret. Area maps are also available, as well as information on sustained damage and onboard fuel. The cupola view (F3), which puts you up through the hatch in the top of the turret, gives you an unobstructed view of the entire area and should be used when you feel there are aircraft in the vicinity. The last view (F4) is the driver's station.

Your machine gun, accessible from the gunner's station, is great against aircraft and infantry, and smoke can be discharged out to about 100 meters. The latter is indispensable when coming up against enemy elements that don't have thermal capabilities. Punch up the smoke, switch to thermal, and it can be a duck shoot for you. Always try to keep enemy tanks in front of you, cycle through the targets until you locate the most dangerous element, and concentrate on that unit first. You'll eventually run into 12 Soviet and three U.S. battlefield machines. Pay particular attention to the targets! Friendly units don't deserve your sabot rounds!

Maxis Software
(distributed by Broderbund Software)
953 Mountain View Drive, Suite #113
Lafayette CA 94549
(415)376-6434

SimCity Terrain Editor ****
Commodore 64/128 version $29.95

Last issue we reviewed ***SimCity,*** a city building simulator that is a both an enormous amount of fun and an education in economics and city planning. Now, Maxis Software has released the ***SimCity Terrain Editor,*** a program that allows you to create your own environments, from lakes and rivers to channels, trees, and clear areas. Or the program can create a variety of random environments for you to build upon. You can also use this editor to alter, the terrain of a city you have already constructed. Some new cities that you can load and build upon have also been added to the disk.

With the terraforming patterns control, you set the limits for the random map generator and the terrain type. You can also smooth out the map, ridding yourself of the blocky graphics so pronounced in *SimCity* itself. All operations have keyboard command equivalents. We're sure that anyone running ***SimCity*** on a Macintosh would want to have such a utility to add to the enjoyment of this simulation.

News and new products

Activision Entertainment
3885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park CA 94025
(415) 329-0800

Prophecy features one of the largest weapons inventories of any role-playing game, as well as an advanced combination of graphics and role-playing. The adventure starts in CrissCross, a small village left in ruins by the evil Krellane, ruler of the Gendorian Empire. Living in constant fear of being discovered, the people of CrissCross dream of the day that the hero of the prophecy will appear and vanquish Krellane. But now, as nightmare becomes reality, you find your family and friends slaughtered by the powerful empire.

Unarmed and alone, you set out on a quest to save the world from Krellane and his. empire. Aided by your lightning reflexes and quick wits, you fight through numerous obstacles and meet unusual creatures as you search for vast treasures and clues to unlock the puzzle that will help defeat Krellane. Traveling through the seven dungeon levels, where every turn in the path is different, you can meet more than 20 animated, individually rendered monsters. Through interaction with NPCs, you'll obtain clues to locate weapons and gather magic spells needed to undo the dark secret of Castle Trinadon. This game is available for PC/MS-DOS machines, priced at $39.95.

Cinemaware
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard
Westlake Village CA 91362
(805) 495-6515

Dark Side, released by Cinemaware under the Spotlight Software label, is a 3-D space adventure that takes you on an ominous jaunt. Transformed into a mercenary of the future, your character becomes a one-person army dedicated to saving the world from imminent destruction. Armed with lasers, shields, and a jet power pack, you must infiltrate a heavily guarded military zone and destroy a doomsday weapon before the apocalypse is unleashed. The price is $39.95 for the PC/MS-DOS, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST versions, and $29.95 for the C64/128 version.

Data East USA, Inc.
470 Needles Drive
San Jose CA 95112
(408) 286-7074

RoboCop is now shipping from Data East USA in format for the C64/128 computer, for $34.95. This game features the same action story line and adventure as the movie of the same name. Old Detroit has been taken over by the corrupt underworld. As RoboCop, part machine and part man, you battle evil forces in the streets and confront the corrupt leaders of the private company, O.C.P., while trying to preserve justice. You'll encounter enemies both on the streets and within O.C.P., requiring the use of Robocop's special-issue Auto-9 gun or his abilities to kick, punch, and jab. With multiple levels of play, the game also features detailed graphics similar to the movie's scenes, including the back streets of Detroit, a city park, and City Hall.

Electronic Arts

Designed by John Ratcliff, ***688 Attack Sub*** has appeared for PC/MS-DOS computers. This is the first submarine simulation that allows you to take command of either a top secret Los Angeles-class U.S. attack sub, or a Soviet Alfa submarine. ***688 Attack Sub*** integrates 256 colors with 3-D graphics to give you both a visually realistic simulation and a naval experience that captures the feel of modern-day conflict. As captain of the sub, you give orders to crew members, who come to life in the form of digitized pictures. In peacetime, you hunt and dodge foreign subs while trying to avoid actions that could lead to a shooting match. As the cold war turns hot, you'll duel other hunter/killers to the death. Missions become increasingly more dangerous as you stalk ballistic missile submarines and execute bold attacks on enemy convoys and battle groups while protecting your own forces. You are finally ordered to make daring cruise-missile strikes at inland nuclear facilities and fight a heavily armed fleet in order to make your escape. ***688 Attack Sub*** is priced at $49.95. A 5¼″ and 3½″ combination disk version is available for $54.95.

Challenge your favorite opponent to Kung-Fu style hand-to-hand combat while street fighting in the toughest neighborhoods with the newly released *Double Dragon* for the Atari ST Billy and Jimmy Lee are twin brothers who learned to fight for survival. When Billy's girlfriend is kidnapped by the Black Warriors, led by the mysterious Shadow Boss, Billy and Jimmy must pursue the savage street gang through the sprawling slums, factories, and outskirts of the city to reach the hideout of their enemy. The price is $39.99 for the Atari ST Versions are also available for the C64/128 ($34.99), and Commodore Amiga and PC/MS-DOS machines ($39.99).

Infocom, Inc.
125 Cambridge Park Drive
Cambridge MA 02140
(617) 492-6000

A top-selling novel and TV ratings top per, James Clavell's ***Shogun*** has now been brought to the Apple Macintosh and Commodore Amiga personal computers. You become John Blackthorne and enter the 16th century, embarking on an uncharted route to Japan. Upon reaching land, you are thrust into the upper echelons of feudal Japanese society at the moment a political power struggle is erupting between two Japanese regents who aspire to be shogun. While adapting to this exotic culture, you befriend Toranaga, one of the regents, and fall in love with Mariko, the beautiful court translator. The action of the story revolves around the powerful political forces that influence and ultimately control your life and the lives of Toranaga and Mariko. The game is priced at $59.95.

Journey is a graphically illustrated world of dwarves, elves, nymphs, and wizards. ‘The story starts in a village that has endured suffering for five years. When all hope began to fade, a party was sent out on a quest for the revered wisdom of a great wizard, Astrix. The first party never returned, and a second party is now being formed to again attempt to find Astrix. As an apprentice food merchant, you accompany the party and keep a diary.

In the tradition of J. R. R. Tolkien's ***The Lord of the Rings,*** this program places you in the magical adventures of five adventurers as they solve puzzles, overcome obstacles, and explore unknown lands. You'll pass into the adventure with ease by simply selecting commands from a menu. Each character can act on his or her own, sometimes advancing the quest, sometimes hindering it. You can help them decide where to explore and what actions to take, becoming a part of their strategies and problem-solving. And, because you control the actions of the party, you must play the part of a combat strategist, physician, magician, and character judge, all while pursuing the defeat of the evil that has infested the land. The price for the IBM, Macintosh, Apple II, Apple II GS, and Commodore Amiga versions is $49.95.

Psygnosis Limited
Century Buildings
Tower Street
Liverpool L34BJ
United Kingdom

The new arcade thriller ***Blood Money*** plunges you into a maelstrom of destruction. With over 1MB of graphics in stunning colors, over 400K, of exciting soundtrack, and challenges for all your game-playing skills, this game finds you swapping from submarine to helicopter to jet pack in your fight against creatures and alien weapons that assault you from all sides. The game involves strategy as well as fighting skill as, after buying necessary weapons, you balance your budget throughout each of the four-alien safari missions. Designed for the Commodore Amiga, ***Blood Money*** is priced at $49.95.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

Modern land warfare is the focus of a new SSI release entitled ***Overrun!*** The year is 1992, and the game includes helicopters as well as new and near-future

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weapons systems. The package includes eight preprogrammed scenarios, three of which depict the Arab-Israeli battles of 1973. You can also create your own scenarios pitting NATO forces against the Warsaw Pact nations. This game has been released for the Apple II computer family and the C64/128 at $49.95.

The new fantasy adventure game from SSI is *Demon's Winter* released in C64/128, PC/MS-DOS, Atari ST, and Commodore Amiga formats. *Demon's Winter* is set in an immense, detailed world and promises many hours of discovery, adventure, and excitement. Your five-character party may consist of dwarves, elves, or dark elves. Each character is rated for speed, strength, intellect, endurance, and skill. As the game progresses and the party gains experience, these attributes increase. Your characters can belong to any of ten classes, including barbarian, thief, wizard, and scholar. The price is $29.95 for the Apple II and C64/128 versions, $34.95 for the PC/MS-DOS format, and $39.95 for the ST and Amiga versions.

Clue corner

The Bard's Tale III (Electronic Arts)

There was a slight error in my hint (DRAGON® issue #144) regarding the viewing of the creators of this game. I forgot to include a third step, which is to get into high resolution graphics mode before BLOADing YUMMY. This is an important step; if it is omitted, the whole thing won't work. Here's the complete method:

1. Get into ProDOS.
2. Insert *The Bard's Tale III* boot disk.
3. Type HGR.
4. BLOAD YUMMY

Chris Carman
Oxford OH

I seem to have stumbled upon a way to give my bard an infinite number of songs. I'm not sure why or how this happened, but upon finding a canteen full of water, my bard drank the entire contents. Now, no matter how many songs she plays, her number of songs is never depleted.

On level three of Brilhasti's demesne, use a PHDO spell early and avoid going right down the passage. In Arboria, make sure to get lots of Water of Life; it's useful in a number of places. In Gelidia, be sure to explore the entire world despite the freezing cold; a diary can be most helpful. In Kinestia, Ferofists's message can give you access to Urmech's lair. Also, take a deal when it's offered to you. In Tenebrosia, exercise care in the deadly tar quarry and beware of decoys in Sceadu's demesne.

Pat Neylan
Guttenberg IA

I recently found an extremely helpful hint for all *The Bard's Tale III* players. To work this secret, you must have beaten Brilhasti ap Tarj. When you go to the Old Man, he will advance you to the 35th level. Then, create a bogus character at the camp and add him to the party. When you talk to the Old Man, he will be confused because suddenly there is a character in the party who has not beaten Brilhasti. However, as the others have accomplished the defeat of Brilhasti, the Old Man will award all 600,000 in experience. Simply repeat this process. An example of what this can do follows. I now have a 213th-level monk with -50 AC and who can do 2,000 damage when punching; a 113th-level archmage with 2,066 spell points; and a 214th-level bard with 123 tunes left!

Adam Query
Roanoke VA

Battletech (Infocom)

When starting the game, you should let Jason stand in the city doing nothing for several hours. This increases your much-needed C-bills. Before your seventh training mission, you should buy armor, a submachine gun, and all of the rifle training you can obtain. It also helps to flee when you are faced with the real thing in your training. The Chameleon is the best mech to use.

Shawn Shoemaker
Rohnert Park CA

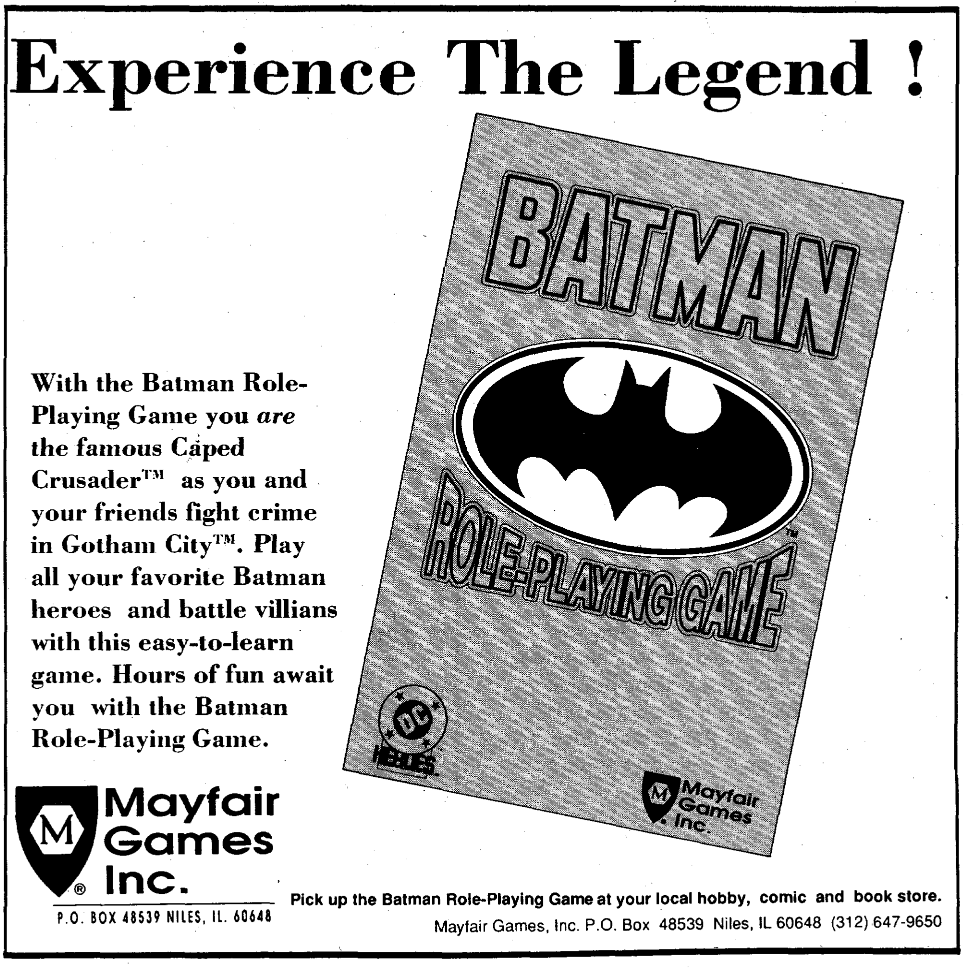
Pool of Radiance (SSI)

To halt the river's pollution, take a boat to the other side of the bay. Follow the river north until you find an island. Walk along the riverbank until you find a boat. Take the boat to the island. The island has many teleport traps that you must avoid in order to reach the pollution's source. If you find some rocks, pick them up. Then, as you move forward, throw a rock ahead of you. That'll take care of the traps. This procedure will take you to the pollution's source. Along the way, you'll have many encounters that yield magic items you can definitely use.

By the way, if you haven't figured it out yet, the Boss is a dragon of B type (and B doesn't stand for brown). The Boss has been in the Pool of Radiance, and it does strange things to a body!

James McCoy
South Bend IN

Avoid unnecessary combat, such as random encounters. Parlay will work with any intelligent creatures in the wilderness, even with trolls and driders. To guarantee success in parlaying, it is a good idea to have at least one character with high charisma. There is also a most interesting treasure in Cadorna Textile House, especially for low-level characters. But you should get help from the local thieves' guild before opening the treasure to earn all you can from it (bringing it back, by the



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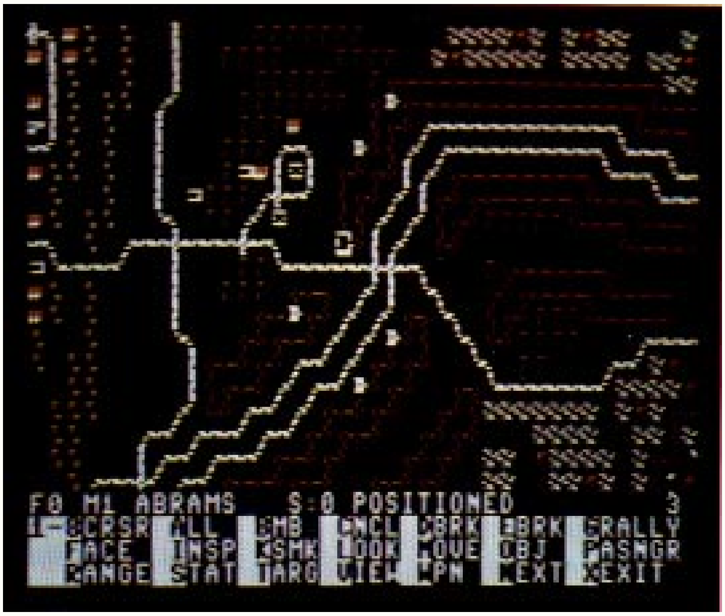
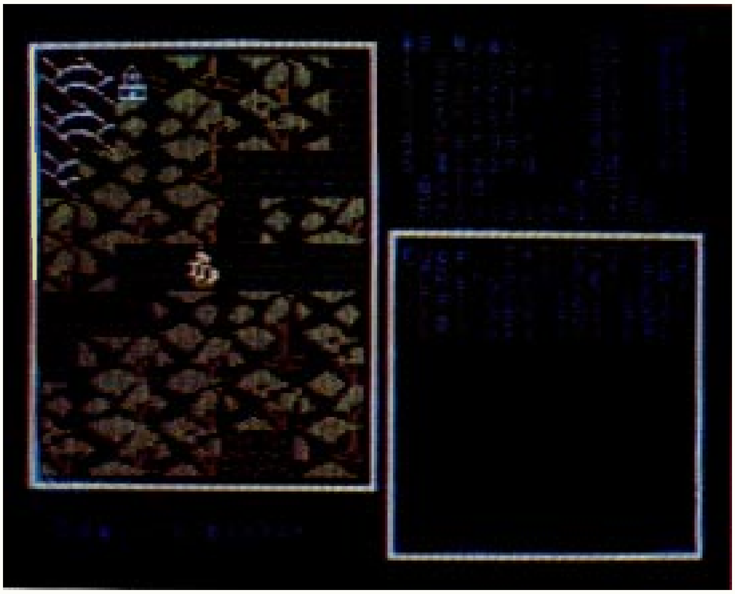


Overrun!: An overview of the modern battlefield.



Demon's Winter: A river voyage across a huge new world.

way, is a commission!). A certain bottle might also help you defeat the vampires, but I found it easier and less tedious to defeat the denizens of the graveyard than those who reside near the bottle. However, if you prefer the latter approach, Yarash's wand and as much healing power as you can muster will be helpful.

Entering the first cubicle you come to in the pyramid usually allows you to avoid the deadly maze within. Confusion in the buccaneers' camp might be better than outright combat. Never miss a chance to set up a watch while camping. Try to be at full strength before the final battle with the Boss, with as many ***hold person*** and offensive spells as possible. To minimize losses, spread out and stay away from walls when the Boss takes aim. You will also learn to hate bugbears!

Tim Peckham
Toronto, Ontario

Sentinel Words 1: Future Magic
(Electronic Arts)

Whenever your communications officer advances, have him attempt to enter the ship's computer system. Watch the Federation Communication channel whenever you have a chance, because this channel informs you of your missions. When fighting many dragons, think before running among them. When boarding Raider ships, open the first door and let the raiders come to you. This way, you can search the ship without worrying about the self-destruct system.

Shawn Shoemaker
Rohnert Park CA

Shadowgate (Mindscape)

Drop the cold sphere into the lake. Take the key (it looks like the skeleton's arm) from the skeleton. Take the silver arrow that points to the secret passage. To kill the lady in the tower, operate the arrow on her. To get the key to lift up the king's throne, play the flute in the room where you found it. lb get the magic wand, put the iron rod (the one in the tower behind the star chart) in the flagpole holder on the lookout.

Jared Boushliman
Carlisle PA

The Last Ninja (Activision)

A friend of mine discovered an option for characters to commit suicide, and I have discovered a back flip maneuver. Both of these options are undocumented and can be used at any time.

To have your character commit suicide, press CONTROL H. The black flip is a little more difficult to do than any of the other maneuvers. I highly recommend a joystick for this one. Move the ninja backward for about a second, then quickly move the joystick forward and press the jump/attack button while moving the joystick forward. You might not be able to get this maneuver the first time you try it, but when you do succeed in mastering the joystick motions, you'll find it very useful.

When you're in the Inner Sanctum, look through the telescope in the telescope room; you might find it interesting.

Howard Chan
Los Angeles CA

Ultima IV (Origin)

To obtain some truly powerful magical wands and bows, go to the Buccaneer's Den. You can get there either south of Lock Lake or east of Trinsic.

Heavily guarded by hordes of daemons, the Shrine of Humility is located roughly south of Moonglow. There's lots of gold, but it'll cost lots of blood.

The Shrine of Sacrifice is an easy place to get Nightshade.

Neil Reicher
Arlington Heights IL

Don't forget that the Beastie Award voting is still proceeding at full speed. Please send your ballot naming the game you are voting for, the system you run the game on, and your name and address to:

The Beastie Awards
179 Pebble Place
San Ramon CA 94583

Until next issue, game on! Ω

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SSI

POOL OF RADIANCE: the first and now classic AD&D computer role-playing game. In the fabled ruins of Phlan and around the northern shore of the Moonsea, your band of six Player Characters fight an unending wave of monsters and strive to unmask their mysterious leader.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
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SSI

HILLSFAR: An action-adventure game that is a crucial stopping point in your travels. *Hillsfar* serves as the training grounds for all your heroes. Transfer your characters from *Pool of Radiance* or *Curse of the Azure Bonds* and increase their skills through vigorous workouts that include combat, maze-running, lock-picking, archery and horseback riding. Succeed in *Hillsfar* and some of your characters' statistics will actually improve. They will emerge from Hillsfar more prepared than ever to survive your dangerous journey.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
Curse of the Azure Bonds
SSI

CURSE OF THE AZURE BONDS: the sequel to *Pool of Radiance*, with deadlier monsters, more powerful spells and new Player-Character types. In this game, you find your characters' arms mysteriously imprinted with azure blue symbols. When they glow, they ensnare your will — you must do as they command! Search the realms for members of the New Alliance who forged these chains of enslavement and remove the Curse of the Azure Bonds.

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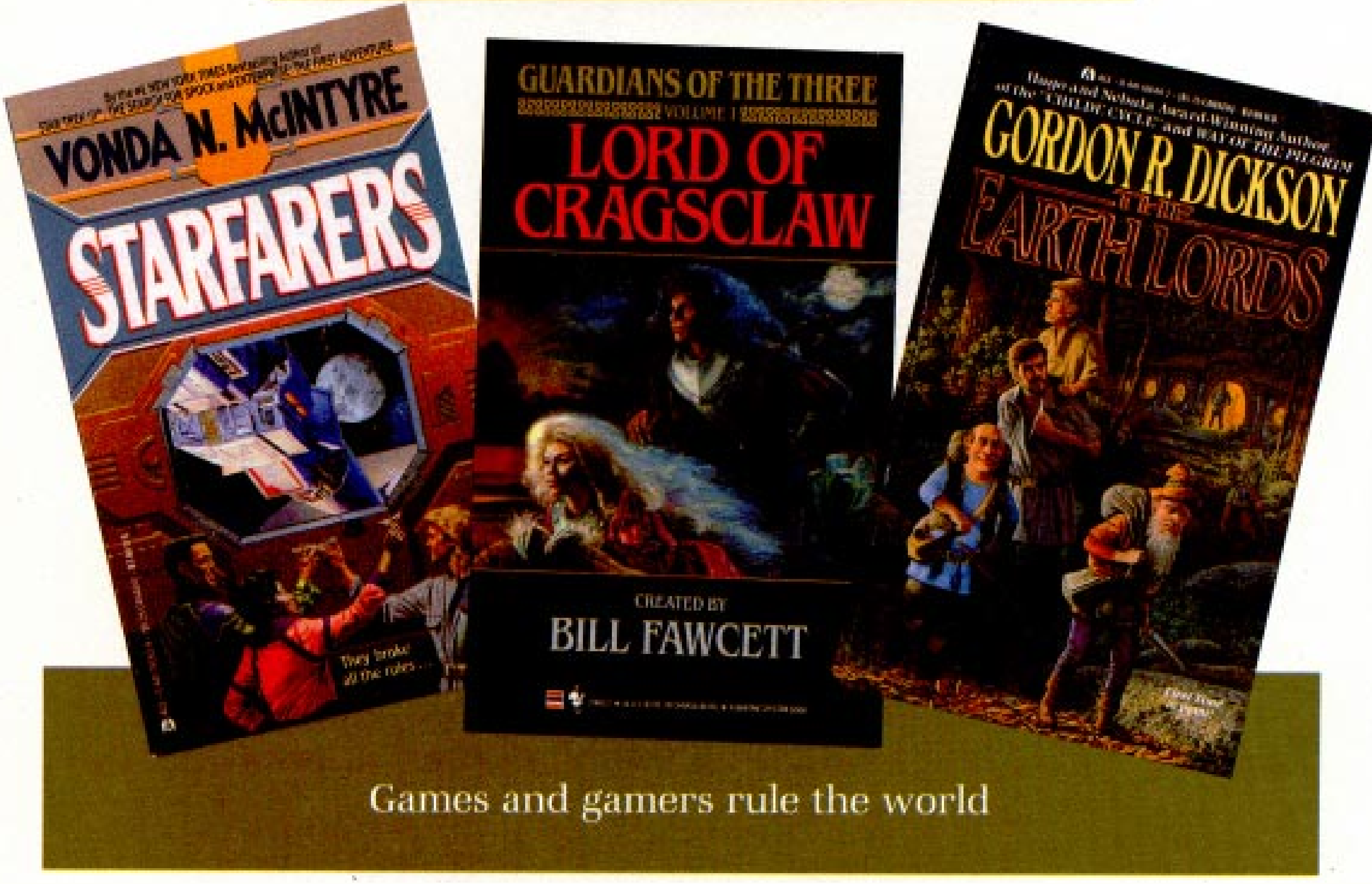
The Role of Books



Games and gamers rule the world

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THE EIGHT
Katherine Neville
Ballantine 0-345-35137-1 $18.95

Take the most convoluted Alfred Hitchcock thriller you can find, shuffle its reels with those of an epic set during the French Revolution, splice in occasional scenes from ***Through the Looking Glass*** and a championship chess match, and you have some idea of what to expect from ***The Eight.*** Katherine Neville's first novel is an adventure on a cinematic scale, kept deftly entertaining by down-to-earth characters and a near-infinite supply of plot twists.

Neville's story hook is the Montglane Service, an ancient, ornate chess set said to hold the key to ultimate power. One narrative thread follows the scattering of the chess set on the eve of the French Revolution, while another finds modern-day computer analyst Catherine Velis thrust headlong into a mission to reassemble the missing pieces. In both cases, the race for the service attracts a varied collection of philosophers and power seekers, all pursuing the service with little knowledge of its true secret.

Neville's view of the French Revolution is at once peripheral and intimate. Though we meet such well-known folk as Talleyrand, Robespierre, and Napoleon (as well as Russia's Catherine the Great), Neville's focus is on individuals rather than on the larger political confrontation. A similar approach colors the contemporary plot, which is laid out in the months just prior to the 1973 Arab oil embargo.

It's a successful tactic. Catherine Velis's professional nonchalance is appealing, and it's about the only thing that keeps her ahead of her opponents. (Help also comes from a Russian spy, reclusive scientist Dr.

Ladislaus Nim, a family of Jewish entrepreneurs, and an Algerian oil minister.) The cast—including the villains—is quirky and uniformly likeable. And if the historical figures seem more distant, it's a function of their culture that doesn't keep them from holding the reader's attention.

The dual-tracked plot and (perhaps) the neatly startling last-minute solution take *The Eight* somewhat beyond the realm of the average espionage campaign, though there are certainly ideas worth adapting in Neville's novel. But then, that's part of the tale's virtue: Rather than taking a formula plot and adding variables, Neville has taken an intriguing idea and woven a multi-faceted adventure around it. *The Eight* is a glittering, stylish debut, and Katherine Neville's future works will definitely capture attention.

GAMEARTH

Kevin J. Anderson

Signet 0-451-15680-3 $3.95

Few things are as frustrating as uncertainty. Unfortunately, "uncertain" precisely describes my reaction to Gamearth. I'm not sure whether my vague sense of dissatisfaction arises from flaws in the novel, or too much effort spent hunting nonexistent flaws. I'm not even certain I know what sort of story Kevin J. Anderson means to tell.

His tale operates on two levels. One tale involves a group of fantasy gamers who disagree about whether or not to continue their campaign, while the other tale follows the group's game characters as they attempt to save their world from the Outsiders' wrath. The individual elements are at least agreeable, but fitting these individual pieces together makes for frustration.

The gaming group is believable, if a bit remote. Melanie, David, Tyrone, and Scott-the players who each have characters and a share in the game's refereeing duties) have run their Gamearth campaign for two years (apparently with no player turnover!) when David decides to end the game and sets a world-destroying menace loose on the map. His chief adversary is Melanie, who vows to preserve Gamearth from anything David can throw at it.

News of the Outsiders' struggle leaks into Gamearth, where elemental stones of power appear as mystic dice, black hex lines mark instant geographic changes, and the Book of Rules governs all. Anderson's depiction of Gamearth has a nicely constructed feel, and the monsters and adventurers stand up well to tradition. A race of shapechangers provides some depth and lends assistance to the group of characters intent on protecting Gamearth from David's creation.

It doesn't pay, though, to analyze the scenario too closely. While we're loosely told which player matches which character (Delrael and Vailret are Melanie's, and two eccentric scientists belong to Scott), there is no real sense of correspondence or connected viewpoint between player and character. Yet the characters refer to the Outsiders by name and call Melanie the Rulewoman. Though there is some question as to whether the gamers created Gamearth or merely shaped a pre-existing reality, it is taken for granted that the gamers can destroy it.

The lack of a larger context is the real sticking point with this novel. Given that Gamearth appears to be real, key questions remain unanswered: If Melanie and her friends created it, where did they get the power to do so, and why aren't they aware of the world's reality? If they didn't create Gamearth, who did—and why have the gamers been allowed to assume authority over Gamearth? We're given a few vague hints, but without some understanding of the larger framework in which both gamers and characters operate, it's hard to anchor our sympathies.

The novel ends well before Gamearth's fate is decided, and prospects for a sequel are as uncertain as Gamearth's origins. If Anderson's real story is that which takes place in his fantasy realm, then a second book is essential. If his emphasis is on the real-world gamers, though, the seemingly ambiguous conclusion may be exactly what he intends to convey, with the fantasy-plot's outcome less important than the life-goes-on message of the conclusion. It's a dilemma left squarely in the reader's lap—the answer isn't in the book, and those (like me) who keep looking for it there are in for a frustrating time.

STARFARERS

Vonda N. McIntyre

Ace 0-441-78053-9 $3.95

Although Vonda McIntyre's latest novel has no official connection to *Star Trek,* it's not hard to discern a thematic link between McIntyre's spacecraft, the Starfarer, and the more familiar U.S.S. ***Enterprise.*** Both are designed to operate as state-of-the-art traveling scientific research institutes. The difference is that Kirk and Spock (or Picard and Riker) are essentially free to roam the galaxy. The crew of the *Starfarer,* by contrast, can't even be sure they'll make it out of Earth orbit.

The time is the early 21st century, when international politics has a peculiar dual purpose: World governments have cooperated with the U.S. to staff the ***Starfarer*** with a varied crew of researchers and explorers (including the first member of the Grandparents in Space program), but familiar political tensions now prompt the government to redefine the ship as a military station and halt its mission of interstellar exploration and contact. Needless to say, the ship's crew opposes the move, and a complex race ensues to see if the ship can escape orbit before the troops arrive.

McIntyre isn't content with only one story line, however. Back on Earth, the ***Starfarer's*** prospective alien-contact expert is involved with the divers, who are genetically-altered sea-dwelling humans also trying to elude the military. (The divers are harder to detect than submarines, so they make better spies.) And a Russian scientist aboard the spacecraft has a secret in his past. Other secondary stories veer into the scientists' personal lives, though gains in emotional texture are offset by a correspondingly thinner plot focus—McIntyre's tense international relationships are taken for granted, not developed from well-defined roots.

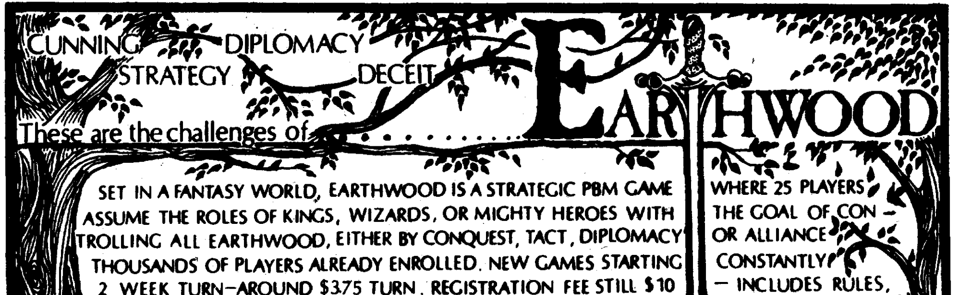
But if ***Starfarers*** belongs in that wing of modern science fiction that promotes space exploration and colonization as the world's one true salvation, it is a far more graceful and entertaining gospel than the loud political tracts usually found in that category, and it takes the premise a step farther than most. Few modern SF writers have asked themselves how humanity will reach the stars; McIntyre deserves full credit for providing a thoughtful answer to a question too rarely posed.

LORD OF CRAGSCLAW

Bill Fawcett and Neil Randall

Bantam 0-553-27462-7 $3.95

I'm generally not a fan of packaged series, in which an editor recruits a roomful of authors to write pieces of a larger story. But despite its excessively grand label, the Guardians of the Three series bids fair to overcome that resistance by a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wide margin. If future volumes maintain the quality of the initial novel, creator Bill Fawcett's chronicles of the mrem may rank as one of the most distinctive creations of modern fantasy, corporate or otherwise.

Most collaborative series to date have relied on well-known writers' names (and their second-hand plots) to attract reader attention. By contrast, this saga is based on the meticulously crafted culture of the mrem, a race of humanoid felines whose multilayered civilization is threatened by the mysterious sorcery of the Eastern Lords and their deadly reptilian allies, the liskash. This is world-building on a major scale; ***Lord of Cragsclaw,*** the initial novel, ranges from the busy streets of metropolitan Ar to wild plains where deadly predators and fierce mrem raiders hunt. The social structure is rich with plausible details, and intricate political conflicts permeate the adventure.

Better still, Fawcett and co-writer Neil Randall hang a compelling tale on Fawcett's setting. ***Lord of Cragsclaw*** follows two linked struggles: that of Talwe, a plainsmrem whose unusual coloring and inborn magical ability set him apart from his clanmates; and that of city-born conspirators Jremm and Mithmid, who are a part of the wizards' underground that guards King Andelemarian from unseen enemies and plots. The individual connecting the links is Andelemarian's white-furred daughter Sruss, who grows from pawn to chess player as events take her far from her familiar city.

Get Our Guidelines!

If you want to write articles for us, get a copy of our writers' guidelines *first*. If you live in the United States or Canada, just send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Writers' Guidelines, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Writers' Guidelines, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. Our guidelines are free. Don't start your typewriter without them.

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The distinctiveness of the mrems' world may limit its durability as a storytelling milieu. But in scope and style, the lands of Guardians of the Three resemble those that belong to TSR's FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign setting—a comparison that raises some interesting possibilities. Few fantasy worlds are well-crafted enough to have identities apart from the novels or game episodes that occur within them. This one, though, shows signs of being one of those few. At the very least, ***Lord of Cragsclaw*** tantalizingly scratches the surface of a promising bit of stone. Whether future novels show the specimen to be pyrite or gold, this first story is more than satisfying.

THE EARTH LORDS

Gordon R. Dickson

Ace 0-441-18044-2 $3.95

It's harder and harder today to distinguish science fiction from fantasy, and ***The Earth Lords*** is a clear example of the problem. It's labeled fantasy (there are dwarves and a hidden underground city), but the context is closer to science fiction (the dwarves are genetically inbred, and their realm is the product of extensive industrial research and development). Yet while the narrative attempts to maintain science-fictional rationality, the essential irrationality of the novel's characters propels the tale toward fantasy again.

Gordon Dickson has definitely done his homework for this novel; the frontier Canadian setting feels authentic, and its atmosphere as well as that of the Earth Lords' realm are sketched in elegantly slim-lined patterns. As a whole, the novel has the feel of an expertly rendered pen-and-ink landscape that is, in its intended sparseness, given a faint, distant aura. Protagonist Bart Dybig, a nomadic sort whose diverse background frequently mystifies even himself, is also set in this well-rendered but sparse landscape. When Dickson "draws" the scenery or focuses narrowly on Bart, ***The Earth Lords*** is engrossing.

But once the story has gone underground, Dickson goes to great lengths to establish political and social conflicts that simply don't make sense. The Inner World is presented as a permanent, fairly stable pocket civilization (essential, since the weapon the dwarves have developed to destroy the surface world has been priming for almost a century). But the class tensions among the Inner Worlds three power groups are inherently unstable, and it's impossible to believe that the political climate Dickson describes would endure as long as he claims. Where the Inner World's physical design and background follow meticulous logic, its inhabitants are rigorously illogical.

In a technical sense, ***The Earth Lords*** might be thought of as good science fiction because of the strength of its concept. Done correctly, the blend of rugged frontier life with baroque Victorian technology would make for refreshing reading (or adventuring). But it's more accurately viewed as oddly flawed fantasy—oddly, because veteran writer Dickson makes the error of assuming that because it's fantasy, it doesn't have to be logical. As it is, the novel is at most a promising template for referees and writers interested in working their own variations on its premise.

BURNING WATER

Mercedes Lackey

Tor 0-812-52104-S $3.95

My tastes in horror fiction are probably peculiar. I prefer mysterious, diabolically intelligent menaces to mindless monsters wallowing in piles of shredded corpses, and I find honest fear and passion far more compelling than sex-crazed rituals and lunatics. Now don't misunderstand: ***Burning Water*** is not short of murders and rituals. But it doesn't feature gore and sex at the expense of its logical, wide-ranging plot, and that's unusual enough to make this novel stand out.

In fact, Mercedes Lackey's tale can very nearly be described as a cross between a Nancy Drew book and an ***Unsolved Mysteries*** TV report. Occult investigator Diana Tregarde exudes competence; she's trained in practical neo-pagan witchcraft as well as in self-defense, is equally at home prowling electronic data bases or musty library stacks, and has (or can develop) any web of informants she's likely to need in a given situation. In short, she's much too good to be true—but Lackey compensates by giving Diana a wry, practical sense of humor and a disarmingly normal outward image.

Diana's latest challenge takes her to Dallas, where police are baffled by a series of bizarre killings with increasingly ritualistic overtones. She quickly confirms that dark magic is involved, but must sift through several mythologies worth of false trails before finally tracing the evil to its source. In the meantime, victims multiply faster than rabbits, and the powers of darkness seek recruits in strange circles indeed.

Burning Water is unusual in several respects. Diana's survey of suspects takes in a wide variety of magical subcultures and traditions, and treats them all with at least a measure of respect. Lackey displays convincing familiarity with her subject; while the main emphasis is on Central-American lore, Diana must deal with everything from Gypsies to an Amerindian shaman to pseuodsatanists in her search, and each world view is drawn lightly yet distinctively.

The leisurely pace of this novel is another unique feature, as Lackey allows her nemesis entity the time and patience to develop its resources. Tezcatlipoca's dreams of conquest are tempered with logic; the murders allow him to accumulate psychic power, while a separate project draws in members of youth gangs to provide physical support. Few horror adversaries display this level of pragmatism and tactical awareness.

Further pluses include an almost complete lack of sexual stereotyping or politics, elements often found in other horror works or discussions of modern magic-oriented religions; and a number of intriguing tidbits concerning Diana's background. These far outweigh the occasional eccentricities, most notably Lackey's inexplicable use of ***ack emma*** as longhand for A.M. (as in "morning"). And it's encouraging that ***Burning Water*** appears to begin a series of Diana Tregarde novels—yet another rarity in the horror arena. Anyone who likes their supernatural yarns laced with intelligence will find this novel more than satisfying.

WHO'S AFRAID OF BEOWULF?

Tom Halt

St. Martin's 0-312-02669-2 $15.95

> "But it's eighth century," said the lecturer. "And you're seventh."
>
> "Who are you calling seventh century?"
>
> "But your saga. . . ." Heedless of personal danger, the lecturer grabbed his sleeve. "Definitely set in seventh-century Norway."
>
> "I know," said Arvarodd sadly. "Bloody editors," he explained.

Such is the scene at the British Museum as a band of recently awakened Vikings prepares to do battle with an evil sorcerer-king turned international corporate tycoon, and it perfectly captures the mild, whimsical tone of ***Who's Afraid of Beowulf?*** Tom Holt's tale of a Norse epic trying to play itself in modern England is one of those books that goes by with effortless ease yet lingers pleasantly in the back of the mind long afterward.

The novel starts quietly enough, when American archaeology student Hildy Frederiksen accidentally stumbles across the enchanted ship of one Hrolf Earthstar and his men, buried long ago after a battle with an evil sorcerer-king. Her discovery awakens the sleeping Norsemen, and King Hrolf promptly realizes that his old adversary is still very much alive, with his fingers deep in international trade and sights aimed at subtle world domination. But if the Vikings are to have any chance of defeating the Gerrards Garth business empire, they must first succeed in blending into a very strange world, where beer comes in metal tubes and man can travel without horses.

Holt's novel is light comic fantasy with a solidly British twist, but while the humor is culturally similar to that of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett, it's of a perceptibly different slant as well. For all its inherent silliness, ***Who's Afraid of Beowulf?*** is a quiet, thoughtful tale whose comedy comes almost entirely from its characters. Very rarely have Norse personalities been given the diversity of shading Holt provides, and it's entertaining to learn that no one Viking warrior is necessarily just like the next. Even the villains, including sometime wolf Thorgeir Stormshepherd, are an engaging lot, and the two sides manage to thoroughly bewilder and bemuse everyone from the BBC to a crack antiterrorist squad.

The aforementioned silliness also benefits from Holt's logical plotting. The sorcerer-king has adapted magic to the technological age-but Hrolf and company have the ultimate magical jamming device, an ancient amulet that's actually a neatly wired circuit. (Before the adventure is over, they've had to steal a substitute from the British Museum and borrow power from a pair of energy sprites engaged in perpetual games of chance.)

I recall reading recent comments by gamers asserting that broad humor simply doesn't belong in a fantasy setting meant to be taken seriously. ***Who's Afraid of Beowulf?*** demonstrates the exception to that rule; rather than imposing humor on a serious construct, Holt extracts natural humor from his juxtaposition of two perfectly straightforward worlds and the individuals who populate them. That can't be said of most comic fantasy novels or FRPG campaigns, which tend to be entertaining but not memorable. Holt's story has both qualities, and reading it is like finding a pearl in a bag of ordinary marbles.

Recurring roles

It is longer past deadline than usual this time, so now the stack of repeat material threatens to overbalance the desk. Best news first. The Fairy Tales series of elegant (and uniformly extraordinary) rewritings of traditional stories has a new home at Tor Books, and Patricia Wrede's version of ***Snow White*** and ***Rose Red*** (Tor, $15.95) is as intriguing as its predecessors. This version of the Grimms' tale is transplanted to Elizabethan England, and Wrede neatly balances elements of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Celtic lore in a lightly formal package.

Shifting focus to the mysterious East finds Judith Tarr in fine form with ***A Wind In Cairo*** (Bantam, $3.95), the tale of Hasan al-Fahl Sharif, transformed from reckless young socialite to the prize stallion Khamsin, cursed to remain a horse until he atones for a range of misdeeds and submits to a woman's will. This is a superbly stylized blend of romance and magic, with sand almost blowing off the pages.

Other Arabian Nights material may be less elegant but no less consistent. ***Crystals of Air and Water*** (Bantam, $3.95) con-

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tinues Stephen Goldin's chronicles of storyteller/wizard Jafar al-Sharif and his loyal djinn with thorough efficiency, blending romantic complications with the growing threat from Aeshma the daeva. Goldin's prose is informal, but his writing remains insightful. Slightly more exotic flavor marks *Paladin of the Night* (Bantam, $4.50), second in Margaret Weis's and Tracy Hickman's Rose of the Prophet series. An excess of heroes still causes problems here, but threads are beginning to intertwine more smoothly, and Black Paladin Auda ibn jad is an extraordinarily impressive nemesis.

The Black Jade Road (Ace, $3.50) takes readers both farther east and farther west, as Kathryn Grant picks up where *The Phoenix Bells* left off. While there are some good individual moments, Grant's tale is best described as weak tea. Oriental motifs are thin at best while Emperor Ty-Sun remains cut off from his native China, but Ty-Sun's presence crowds out more familiar Western signs and symbols.

The Department of Sequels and Conclusions includes one pleasant surprise: Dave Smeds' *The Schemes of Dragons* (Ace, $3.50), a return visit to Tanagaran, where one fearsome dragon is enough to keep most of a continent running for cover. (Did I say one dragon? Watch for some knowledgeable-sounding lizard lore and devious double-reverse plotting, as well as some interesting, vaguely African touches.) Also worth collecting is *Tomorrow's Magic* (Fawcett Juniper, $2.95), second in Pamela F. Service's series about the post-holocaust return of Arthurian legends. It takes daring to cast Merlin the magician as a teenager, but Service continues to do so successfully.

Spiral of Fire (Tor, $3.95) generates mixed emotions. On one hand, Deborah Turner Harris builds appealing characters in her third "Mages of Garillon" book (the last in a trilogy, though a cover quote hints at further tales) but refuses to provide convincing justification for breaking her own rules of magic. Being chosen by the gods seems here to mean being favored by the author. Harris must be classed as a storyteller who is mostly a flimflam artist—a frustrating waste of potential talent. By contrast, *Streams of Silver* (TSR, $3.95) finds R. A. Salvatore flexing his writing skills as he continues the adventures of Wulfgar the barbarian, Drizzt the dark elf, and their companions from the earlier novel *Crystal Shard*. While listed as the second book in a trilogy, the tale is mostly self-contained, with a host of lively supporting characters and a dwarven labyrinth that manages not to steal from Tolkien's Mines of Moria. No other FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign novelist has been as clever at turning game traditions into credible literary twists.

Mail call

I'm still impressed with the quality of feedback I've received as a result of these columns, and I'm still open to suggestions of books and authors to watch. But all those books take up space, and acquiring more space means acquiring a new address. Letters and books for potential review should now be directed to:

John C. Bunnell
12320 SW Center St. #32
Beaverton OR 97005

While (as usual) I can't guarantee a response to all letters or reviews of all books, I do value all of the input offered. Until next time, happy reading! Ω

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held:
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered:
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, PO. Box 111, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited™, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Anne Brown or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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ARCANACON VII, July 7-10 ✦

Melbourne's longest-running role-playing gaming convention will be staged at the Collingwood Education Centre in Collingwood, Australia. Featured events will include a wide variety of tournaments, a masquerade, videos, a convention dinner, and a dealers' room. Write to: ARCANACON VII, PO. Box 312, Glenroy 3046, AUSTRALIA.

CASTLECON 2, July 7-9

This convention features science fiction, fantasy, and gaming. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City at 2799 Jeff Davis Highway in Arlington, VA. Room rates are $65 for a room with quad occupancy. Call (703)418-1234 for reservations (mention CASTLECON 2 for room discounts). Featured events will include computers, space science and technology panels and discussions, video games, a masquerade party, writers' workshops, an art show, and a merchants' room. Preregistration for CASTLECON 2 is $20. Send check, money order, or query letter to: FanTek, Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001; or call: Bruce Evry at (703)360-2292.

DOVERCON V, July 8-9

This year, DOVERCON will be held at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, N.H. Features include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament, a film festival, and miniatures and art competitions. Registration at the door is $15 for both days, or $10 for one day. Each event costs $2. Vendor and game-master inquiries are welcome. Write to: Information, DOVERCON V, PO. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

DALLASCON '89, July 14-16

The largest gaming convention in the Southwest is to be held at the LeBaron Hotel on Regal Row in Dallas, Texas. Over 100 events in role-playing, board, and miniatures gaming (including an AD&D® tournament and BATTLETECH* events) are planned, with a dealers' room, movies, and an auction. Write to: DALLASCON, PO. Box 867623, Plano TX 75086.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, July 14-16

Held at the Sheraton Park Central, 12720 Merit Drive, I-635 at Coit Road, this gaming fantasy festival will offer 140 dealers' tables and more than 60 guests. Features will include two 24-hour video rooms, Japanimation, 24-hour gaming, four-track programming, a masquerade, an open con suite, an art show and auction, a charity auction, artists' and writers' workshops, autograph sessions, filksinging, dancing, an amateur-film festival, and a talent show. About 3,000 people are expected to attend Admission for this event is $20 for three days, if paid in advance, or $25 at the door. Single-day admissions will be available at the door; prices are $10 Friday, $12 Saturday, and $10 Sunday. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214)349-3367.

MEMPHIS FANTASY CONVENTION VI July 14-16

This fantasy fiction and gaming event will be held at the OMNI Memphis Hotel, 939 Ridgelake Boulevard, in Memphis, Tenn. (phone: (901)684-OMNI). Room rates are $60 for a single or a double. Guests include: Larry Elmore, Keith Parkinson Allan Hammock, George R. R. Martin, Michael Bishop, Tim Truman, and many other gaming, science-fiction, fantasy, and comics guests. Events include: 'round the clock gaming (over 50 role-playing and board games tournaments, including AD&D® game features, solo AD&D® game features, and BATTLETECH* and STAR TREK* game events); a dealers' room; panels; films and videos; a banquet; a costume contest and party; an art show and auction; a writing contest; and more. At-the-door rates are $22 for three days, $18 for the banquet and $11 for a T-shirt. Write to: Ron Crum, Comics & Collectibles, 4750 Poplar, Memphis TN 38117; or call him at: (901)683-7171.

WINDSOR GAMEFEST VII, July 14-16 ❄

This gaming convention will be held in Vanier Hall at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario. Guest of honor will be fantasy artist Kevin Davies. Activities will include fantasy, science-fiction, and miniatures games tournaments, and many board-gaming events. Preregistration fees are $8 Canadian for one day, or $15 Canadian for the weekend. At-the-door fees are $9 Canadian for one day, or $17 Canadian for the weekend. Write to: Windsor Gaming Society, PO. Box 7463, Sandwich Postal Station, Windsor, Ontario, CANADA, N9C 4G1.

ATLANTICON 89, July 20-23

This year's ATLANTICON will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center and the Baltimore Sheraton Inner Harbor. Attractions include four days of adventure gaming, discount coupons to each preregistrant for purchases in the dealers' area, game demonstrations, game auctions, and open-gaming areas. Conventioneers will be within walking distance of many other attractions, including Baltimore's Harbor Place, the National Aquarium, the Maryland Science Center, the United States frigate *Constellation,* and the World War II submarine, U.S.S. *Torsk.* Registration for the weekend is $14 prepaid and $18 at the door. One-day passes will also be available at the door. Write to: ATLANTICON 89, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220; or call: (301)298-3135

HAYSCON V, July 21-23

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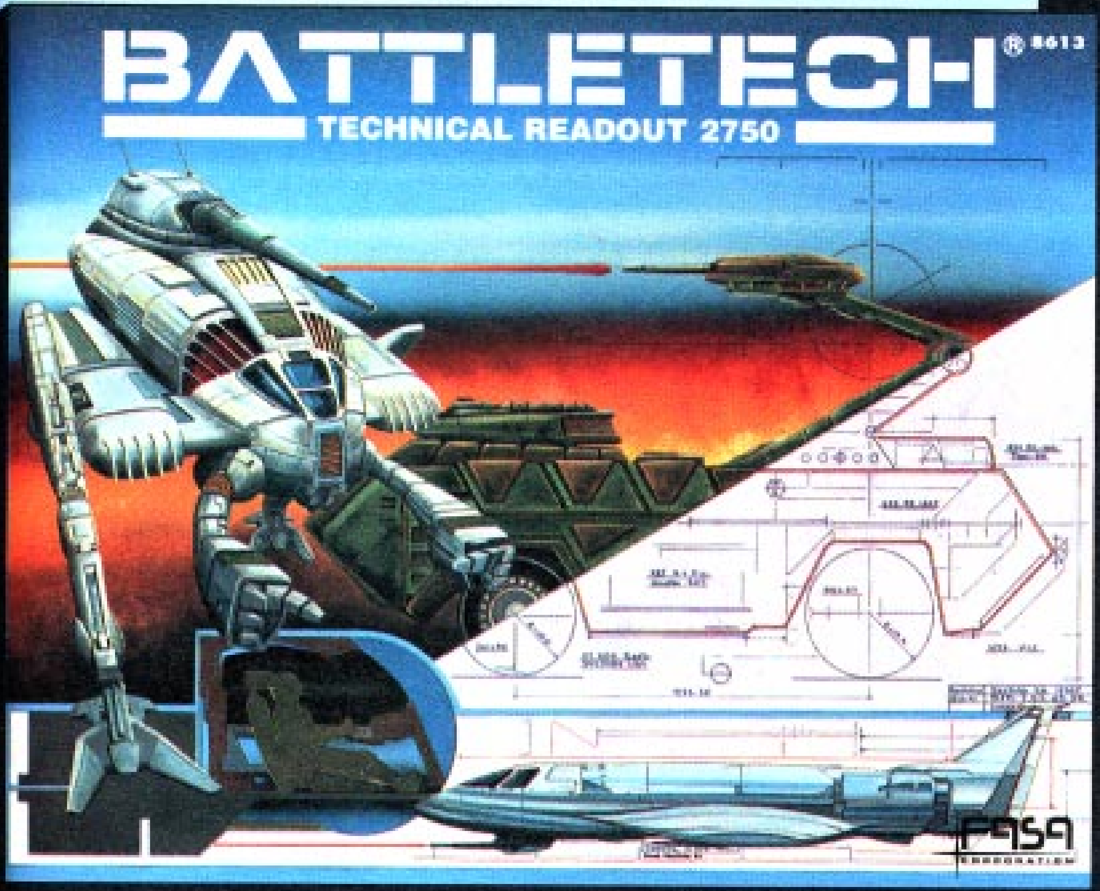

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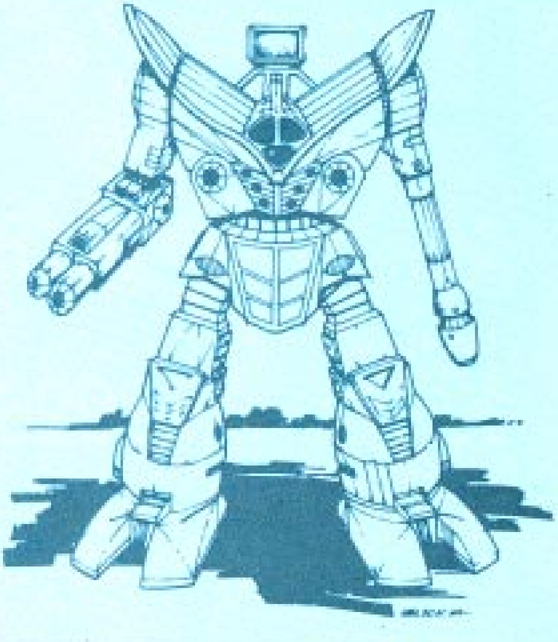

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ERRADI-CON 1, July 22-23
This convention will be held at the Illinois Valley Banquet Center at 920 2nd Street in La Salle, Ill. Planned events include BATTLETECH*, TALISMAN*, and AD&D® games, along with a variety of miniatures events, a silent auction, and board gaming of all sorts. Prizes will be given to winners of events, and a special drawing will be held as well, R&R Hobbies will be available to meet all your gaming needs. Preregistration fees for both days are $6 in advance, or $8 at the door. Send an SASE to: Paul Defenbaugh, 932 26th Street, Peru IL 61354; or call: (815) 224-4637 or (815) 223-3513.

MYTHCON XX, July 28-31 ✻
This year's MYTHCON will be held at the Gage Towers at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The theme of this convention is "Mythic Elements in Fantasy." Our writer guest of honor will be Guy Gavriel Kay; our scholar guest of honor will be Raymond Thompson ***(The Return from Avalon).*** Special guests will include Michael G. Coney, Eileen Kernaghan, and others yet to be announced. Membership for this event is $25 U.S., or $30 Canadian. Payments may be mailed to: MYTHCON XX, PO. Box 806, Station A, Nanaimo, B.C., CANADA, V9R 5N2. Information and enquiries regarding papers may be mailed to: Mason Harris, Department of English, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., CANADA, V5A 1S6. For writers' workshop information, write to: Neville Books, 5211 Neville Street, Burnaby, B.C., CANADA, V5J 2H7; or call (604)435-6500.

ORLANDO SKIRMISHES '89, July 28-30
SKIRMISHES presents this role-playing and war-gaming convention at the Plaza Inn on Lee Road and Interstate 4 in Orlando, Fla. Room rates are $35 for single occupancy and $40 for double occupancy. Game events include AD&D®, TRAVELLER*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CAR WARS*, and SEEKRIEG* games; board gaming; a KILLER* tournament; dealers; a miniatures-painting contest; and more. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (800) 342-0271. Registration is $18 for the entire weekend; send your fee to receive a program booklet. Write to: SKIRMISHES, PO. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 293-7983.

SUMMER CON OF 89, July 29
Sponsored by the Spellbound Wargamers Association, this gaming event will be held in Lebanon, Pa. The site is the Knights of Columbus Social Hall, located on the corner of Route 72 North and C & L Street. Activities will begin at 10 A.M., and will run until 10 P.M. Scheduled events include: CHAMPIONS*, SHOGUN*, AXIS & ALLIES*, BATTLETECH*, CAR WARS*, DELUXE ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, WOODEN SHIPS AND IRON MEN*, RECON*, and AD&D® games. A drawing will also be held for door prizes. Refreshments will be served throughout the day. Preregistration is requested, although tickets will be sold at the door. Costs are $5 in advance, and $7.50 at the door. Make all checks payable to Spellbound Hobbies. Write to: Scott Humm, 419 Canal Street, Lebanon PA 17042; or call Spellbound Hobbies at: (717) 273-0567.

PROJECT...GENESIS V, July 30
This protoriginal fantasy-gaming convention will be held at Chiminello's Hall, 2221 North Weber in Fresno, Calif. Featured tournament and open-play events will include BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, STAR WARS*, TDON*, and AD&D® games, as well as many others. Other scheduled events include computer gaming, Japanese films, a miniatures contest, a swap meet, and more. Preregistration for this one-day event is $3 if paid before July 13; after that, registration is $5. Dealers' tables are $20 for an eight-foot table; interested parties should call or write for more information. Swap-meet tables are $5 for a whole table and $3.50 for a half (table space is required for the swap meet). The convention needs judges for many events. Those accepted for positions receive a refund on their registration fees. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phillip S. Pittz, 5415 East Washington, Fresno CA 93727; or call (209) 255-4682. Make checks payable to Phillip S. Pittz.

CAPITOLCON V, August 5
This year's convention will be held at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, Ill. Featured events will include board, miniatures, and fantasy role-playing games. Registration fee: $4.00. Write to: Bill Wilson, 99 Cottonwood Drive, Chatham IL 62629; or call: (217) 483-5797.

Y-FEST, August 5-6
This gaming convention will be held at the Wick Park Community Center, Park Ave. between 5th Ave. and Elm St. in Youngstown, Ohio. Events include RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournaments, with BATTLETECH*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, WARHAMMER* FANTASY and 40,000, and other miniature figure and role-playing events. Gaming fees are $5 per day or $7 for both days. Preregistration will be accepted up to July 20. Write to: Breastplate Hobbies, 3002 Center Rd., Poland OH 44514; or call (216) 757-9791.

HOUSTON FANFAIR, August 12-13
This fantasy festival, which will be held at a hotel to be announced, will draw from 600 to 800 attendees and will offer 60 dealers' tables and 15 guests. Features will include a video room, Japanimation, programming, gaming, an open con suite, a masquerade, an art show, filksinging, and more. Admission is $5 for Saturday, $4 for Sunday, and $6 for both days. Write to: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

COLLECTOR'S EXPO, August 18-20
This collector's show is held semiannually at the Eastgate Mall on Brainerd Road, just off Interstate 75, in Chattanooga, Tenn. Show hours are 10 A.M. to 9 P.M. on Friday and Saturday, and noon to 6 PM. on Sunday. Guests will include representatives from Marvel Comics. Events will include an AD&D® tournament (which begins Friday and ends with final rounds on Sunday); an ongoing DRAGONLANCE® board game; a TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES* event; workshops on comic-book and baseball-card collecting and gaming; a miniatures-painting contest; video showings of *Star Trek* bloopers, X-Men cartoons, and more; an auction hosted by our own Freddy Krueger (with proceeds going to the American Cancer Society); slide shows; and a Saturday-night costume contest. Admission to this show is free! The entire mall is the showroom area. It will include: comic books; baseball cards; ***Star Trek, Dr. Who,*** and ***Blakes 7*** memorabilia; Japanese animation; gaming; and other related items. Dealers' tables are 8′ long; only 50 are available. Prices for these tables vary with the number of tables a dealer desires. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 2518-C Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; or call Dana Pinkard (show chairperson) at: (404) 235-2179; or Patrick Swinford at: (404) 234-5309.

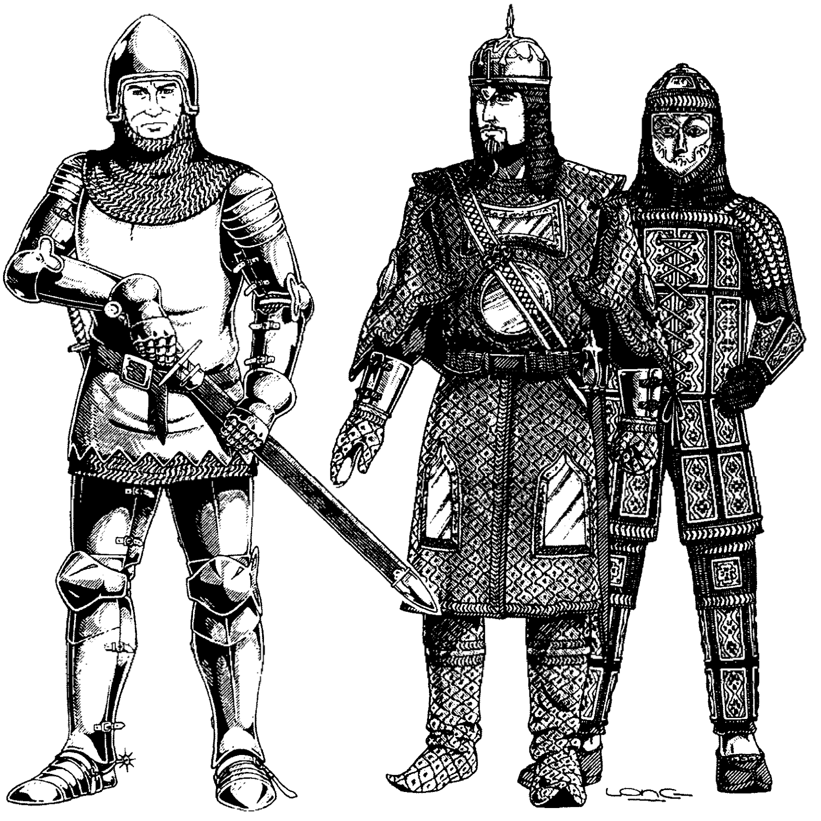
ECONOMYCON II, August 18-20
ECONOMYCON II will be held at the Plaza de Fiesta, 2740 S. Alma School Rd., Suite #18, Mesa AZ. Admission is free. Events include BATTLETECH*, AD&D®, and BATTLE FOR MOSCOW* tournaments, and painted figures contest with prizes. Other games will include WWII microarmor*, WARHAMMER* FANTASY miniatures battles, a WORLD IN FLAMES* campaign game, and open gaming. Send an SASE to: Roaming Panther Game Co., 2740 S. Alma School Rd. #16, Mesa AZ 85202.

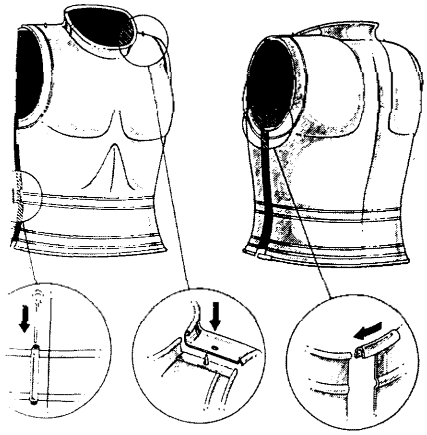
GATEWAY '89, September 1-4
STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, PO. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

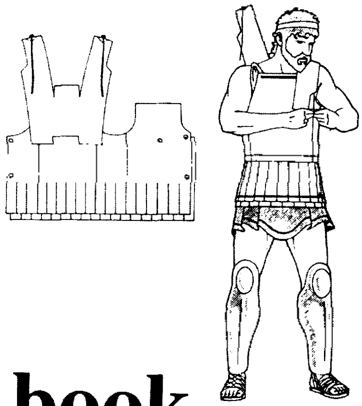
NANCON 88-X1, September 1-4
NANCON 88-X1 will again be held Labor Day Weekend at the Ramada Northwest Crossing, 12801 N.W. Frwy., Houston, Tex. Numerous events this year will include two AD&D® events, with SQUAD LEADER*, BATTLETECH*, PARANOIA*, TWILIGHT 2000*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, 15mm Napoleonics, STAR WARS*, HARPOON*, and CHAMPIONS* games. Send an SASE to: Nan's Games & Comics Too, 2011 S.W. Frwy., Houston TX 77098.

TACTIKHAN '89, September 1-3
The Denver Gamers Association and Worldwide Wargamers present TACTIKHAN '89, held at the Ramada Hotel, Westminster, Colorado, on September 1-3, Labor Day Weekend, 1989. Gaming of all kinds, official RPGA™ Network tournaments, the Puffing Billy tournament, and an auction will be offered. Miniature events will be staged by the Colorado Military Historians. Registration is $14 for the weekend until August 25, and $17 thereafter. Write to: Denver Gamers Association, PO. Box 11369, Denver CO 80211.

AMERICAN GAMES FAIR, September 8-10
Communications, Conferences & Exhibitions Ltd. presents this premier event, rescheduled from earlier this year. This show will be held September 8-10 at the Roosevelt Hotel (45th Street and Madison Avenue). This event is the first consumer and trade show for the games industry to be held in the New York area. A program of special events and entertainment will run throughout the duration of the fair. Highlights include: prize-winning RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournaments and RPGA™ Network PARANOIA* tournaments; an open-gaming area; daily game demonstrations and presentations; seminars for game enthusiasts, manufacturers, retailers, and designers; an inspirational artists exhibit of original and poster art; and a "Best of Show" game competition. All categories of games are included within the scope of the show. Hours for this fair are as follows: Friday, trade only, 9:30 AM to 1 P.M.;







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AUSTIN FANFAIR, September 8-9
Over 60 dealers' tables, 15 guests, and over 700 convention-goers will be in attendance for this fantasy festival, which will be held at a hotel to be announced. Features will include a video room, Japanimation, programming, gaming, an open con suite, a masquerade, an art show, filksinging, and more. Admission will be $5 for Saturday, $4 for Sunday, or $6 for both days, and will be available at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

MIRACLECON '89, September 9
This gaming convention will be held at the Shenango Valley Civic Center, on the corner of Pitt Street and Shenango Avenue in Sharon, Pa. Featured events will include an AD&D® tournament, an auction, a miniatures-painting contest, a dealers' room, and other role-playing and miniatures games events. Registration fees are $5 at the door. There will be no separate event fees. Write to: Timothy A. Riley, 308 West Church Street, Urbana OH 43708; or: 7855 Elm Street SE, Masury OH 44438; or call him at: (513) 653-7848.

VALLEY CON 14, September 9-10
This science-fiction, fantasy, and comics convention will be held at the Days Inn Conference Center at 600 30th Street South in Moorhead, Minn. Guests will be announced at a later date. Activities will include video rooms, an art show and auction, a hucksters' room, panels and demonstrations, a banquet, and a variety of gaming events, which will include STAR TREK*, RUNEQUEST*, ROLEMASTER*, SPACEMASTER*, STAR WARS*, DR. WHO*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, and AD&D® game features. Send an SASE to: VALLEY CON 14, PO. Box 7202, Fargo ND 58108; or call: (701)232-1954.

SIOUX CITY WARGAMES IV
September 15-17
This gaming convention will be held at the Marina Inn in South Sioux City, Nebr. Featured events will include RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, DIPLOMACY*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, SPEED CIRCUIT*, CAR WARS*, AXIS & ALLIES*, EMPIRE III*, JOHNNY REB*, HARPOON*, CHAINMAIL, World War II and Modern microarmor, and science-fiction games, among others. Special room rates will be available to conventioneers. Admission to this event is *free.* Write to: SIOUX CITY WARGAMES IV, ATTN: Dave Patch, 1600 Pierce, Sioux City IA 51105.

COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST 1989,
September 16-17
The Mt. Vernon Gamers Association will hold the 7th Annual Colonial City Gamefest at the Mt. Vernon Memorial Building, East High St., Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Games will include AD&D®, HARN*, TWILIGHT 2000*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, GLADIATORS*, CIRCUS IMPERIUM*, and historical miniatures games, including WWII HO-scale armor, microarmor, micronaval, ACW, and colonials games. Also included will be WARHAMMER* FANTASY and 40,000, and 25mm CHAINMAIL games. Sunday will include the ever-popular Battle of Mt. Vernon 1862. The convention will also feature a miniatures painting competition auction, retail vendors, and demonstration games. Hours are: Saturday, 10 A.M to 11 P.M.; Sunday, 10 A.M. to 11 P.M. Admission: $5 for the weekend, preregistration only; $3 per day at-the door. Write to: Colonial City Gamefest, c/o Mt. Vernon Gamers Association, PO. Box 1184, Mt. Vernon OH 43050.

1989 CALGARY GAMING CONVENTION
September 22-24
Hosted by the Canadian Wargamers Group and the University of Calgary, this convention welcomes all gamers. This three-day con will include games and miniatures for all levels of players, such as SYSTEM 7*, KREMLIN*, SHOGUN*, WORLD IN FLAMES*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, BATTLETECH*, and CIRCUS MAXIMUS* games. Write to: The Canadian Wargamers Group, 207 Bernard Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T3K 2B6 CANADA.

CONTACT-7, September 29-October 1
This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, located on Hwy. 41 North in Evansville, Ind. Andrew J. Offutt will be the guest of honor; other guests will include George "Lan" Laskowski, Rick Dunning, and Arlan Andrews (toastmaster). Events include RPGA™ Network sanctioned gaming, closed-circuit television programming, an art show, a dealers' room, and a 24-hour hospitality suite. Membership is $15 until September 1; $20 thereafter. Write to: CONTACT-7, PO. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737-3894; or call: (812) 853-5730.

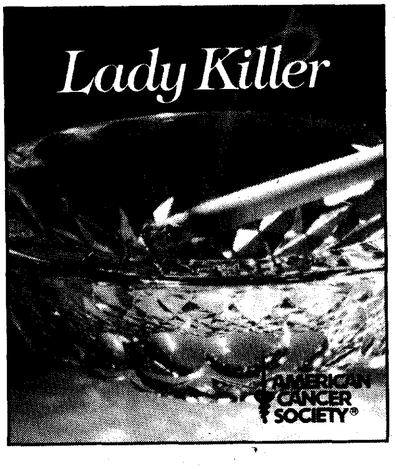
COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS 15
October 6-8
Hosted by the Schenectady Wargamers Association, this convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Schenectady, N.Y. A number of RPGA™ Network events are planned, including a Master's Level AD&D® game tournament. There will also be several other AD&D® game tournaments and single-round events. Other events will include BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CIVILIZATION*, CAR WARS*, DIPLOMACY* (Youngstown lo-player variant), CHAMPIONS*, RUNEQUEST*, and various other role-playing, board, and miniatures games. The convention will also feature a miniatures-painting contest and games auction. Advance registration will be $10 for the weekend, or $15 at the door. To receive a preregistration booklet (mailed in August), send an SASE to: Eric Paperman, Con Director, 418 Vliet Boulevard, Cohoes NY 12047. Room rates for this event are $60 a night for double occupancy and $75 a night for quad. For information about lodging, contact the Schenectady Ramada Inn at: (518) 370-7151.

DRAGON CON '89, October 6-8
This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the OMNI International Hotel and Convention Center in Atlanta, GA. Guests include Anne McCaffrey, Wes Craven, Michael Whelan, Andrew Greenberg, Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, Gary Gygax, Richard Garriott, Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, and Larry Elmore. Preregistration (through September 15) is $30. Fantasy role-playing, strategic, miniatures, and computer gaming will be featured in over 100 tournaments. Other events will include four tracks of workshops and panels, masquerade shows, an art show and print shop, video rooms, art and consignment auctions, a con suite, and more. Send an SASE to: DRAGON CON '89, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362. You may also purchase your advanced membership by VISA or MasterCard by calling Tevex, toll-free, at: (800)456-1162.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '89, October 6-8
SKIRMISHES presents the ninth-annual presentation of this gaming extravaganza. This event will take place at the Holiday Inn-Ashley Plaza, 111 West Fortune Street, in Tampa, Fla. Room rates are $50 for one to four people. Events will include: AD&D®, TRAVELLER*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CAR WARS*, Napoleonics miniatures, SEEKRIEG*, and other games; board gaming; a KILLER* tournament; dealers; and more. Registration is $18 for the weekend; send your fee to receive a program booklet. Write to: SKIRMISHES, PO. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 293-7983.

TOLEDO GAMING CONVENTION 7
October 7-8
The seventh-annual edition of Northwest Ohio's largest gaming convention will be held at the University of Toledo's Scott Park Campus. This year we will have over 140 events, including: role-playing, strategy, tactical, board, and miniatures tournaments; two auctions; demonstrations; painting contests; and dealers and exhibitors. Featured this year are AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER* 40,000, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, GURPS*, STAR WARS*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, AXIS &, ALLIES*, and SPACE: 1889* events. In addition, there will be nonstop movies and open gaming. Send an SASE to: TOLEDO GAMING CONVENTION 7, c/o Mind Games, 3001 North Reynolds Road, Toledo OH 43615.

QUAD CON, October 13-15
The RiverBend Gamers Association will sponsor QUAD CON '89 at Palmer Auditorium, 1000 Brady St., Davenport, Iowa. Special room rates are available at the Best Western Riverview Inn by calling l-800-528-1234 or (319) 324-1921. Games will include AD&D®, D&D®, BATTLETECH*, RECON*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CAR WARS*, STAR TREK*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, GURPS*, GAMMA WORLD®, TRAVELLER 2300*, TWILIGHT 2000*, TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES*, MERP*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, DR. WHO*, DC HEROES*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, CIVILIZATION*, DIPLOMACY*, and AIR SORTIE* games. Other events will include microarmor, a painting contest, a multievent ancients-to-future combat tournament, and a costume contest (no weapons, please). Preregistration is available August 1 ($7 weekend, $3 per day) but must be received by October 1. At the door fees are: $10 weekend, $5 per day. Send a #10 SASE to: RiverBend Gamer's Association, PO. Box 8421, Moline, IL 61265.



Editorial

Continued from page 5

etc. The PCs must infiltrate or assault the Steading (a minor Titan fort) to find out who has been supplying them with high technology, what goals this backer has, etc. The Titans are heavily armed, and most wear some form of nonpowered armor. Their pets, like their masters, are huge and bad-tempered.

"Bunnies in the Walls" (for FGU's BUNNIES & BURROWS™ game): There's an old, ugly house on a hill, somewhere on the outskirts of the lands where the rabbits roam. This particular house (drawn directly from one of the minimodules in Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® game books) is full of monster-worshiping rats. The rats plan to annihilate or dominate all local life, starting with humans and working their way down to lagomorphs. The bunnies have decided not to wait their turn. The GM will have to create stats for warrior and sorcerer rats (and maybe even undead rats), but this could be an amusing one- or two-part adventure. (I tried this one on some unsuspecting players, who were outraged but enjoyed it anyway.)

"The Lost Demilich's Mine" (for TSR's BOOT HILL® game): I once had a group of outlaws, fresh from a Wells Fargo holdup, visit a fantasy country after they fooled with a cursed ring. Their stay at an old farmhouse was interrupted by a paladin on horseback, a lammasu, and giant ants the size of bulldogs. But what if, instead of converting the PCs to the AD&D® game as I did, the PCs found an old cave entrance in the badlands that lead directly to the AD&D® module S1 *Tomb of Horrors,* with appropriate conversions of traps and monsters to the BOOT HILL game? Giving the tomb an Aztec flavor would be a nice move, and you should keep a few of the magical treasures and certainly the monsters, which might be demons, aliens, or whatever.

"The Orc Who Came In From the Cold' (for TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game): A rash of unusual murders and robberies is noted in a major city, and eventually an agent is slain there. The PC agents are sent to investigate. They eventually find that they are facing an extremely powerful being who might not even be human. The being is, in fact, a half-orc, high-level assassin with several magical items, converted from the AD&D® game to TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game statistics. The assassin escaped into this world through a magical gateway created by a strange ring he wears. The elven fighter/thief/magic-user who comes after him also wears one of these rings (perhaps a player can be allowed to run the elf, if he or she can role play the situation properly).

Cross-genre adventures can be a much-loved break from "regular" campaigns. All you need is a little imagination. Need more villains for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game? Use Demogorgon and Orcus, conjured up by an evil magician and set to do battle with each other in the heart of New York City. I once used an old TRAVELLER module, Research Station *Gamma,* for a supervillain hideout, and had plans to introduce undead zombies into Steve Jackson Games' CAR WARS® setting ("Night of the Unliving Road Warriors," or something like that). Give the idea a try.

Remember: Only you can prevent complacency.

Roger E. Moore

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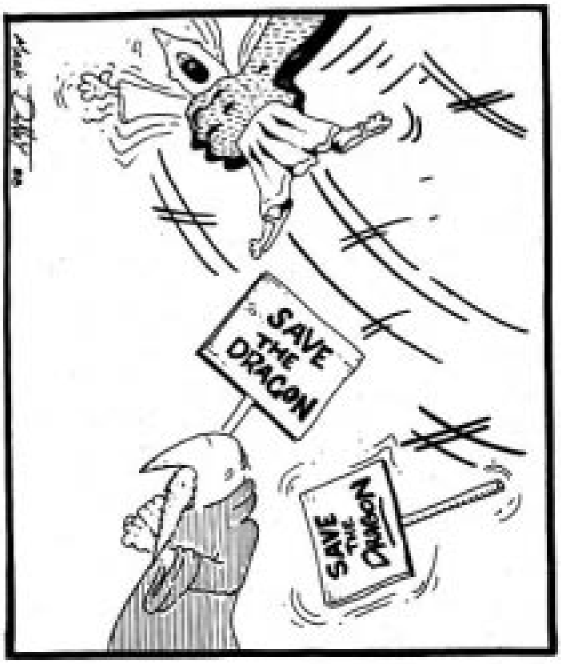
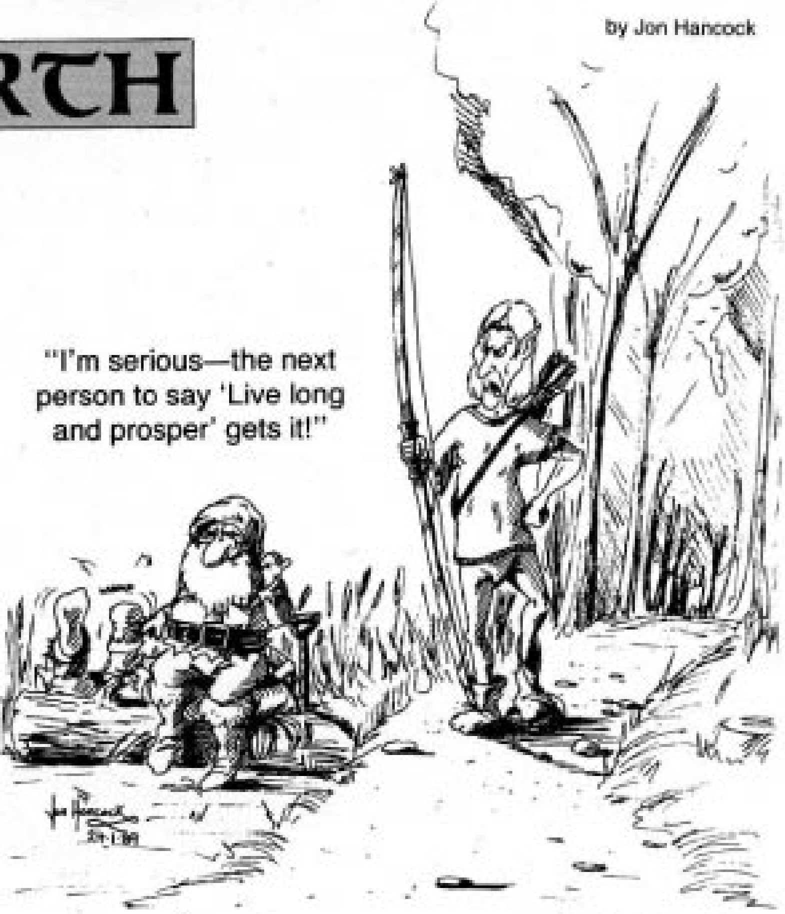
DRAGONMIRTH

by Mark Doney

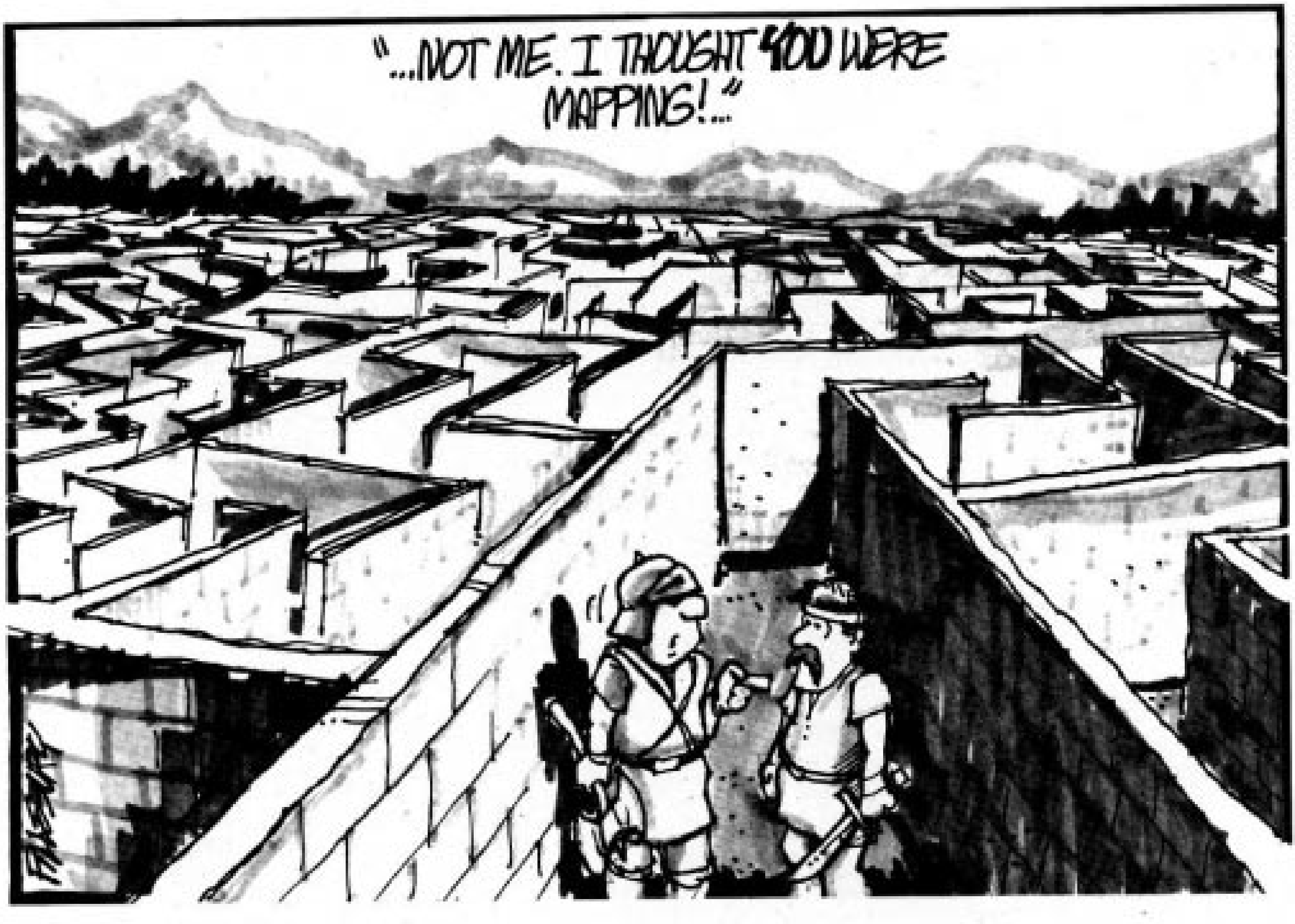

SAVE THE DRAGON
SAVE THE DRAGON

by Jon Hancock



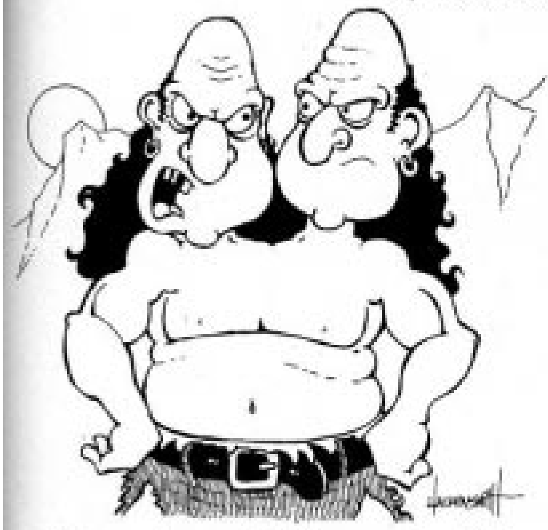
"I'm serious—the next person to say 'Live long and prosper' gets it!"

by Joseph T. Pillsbury



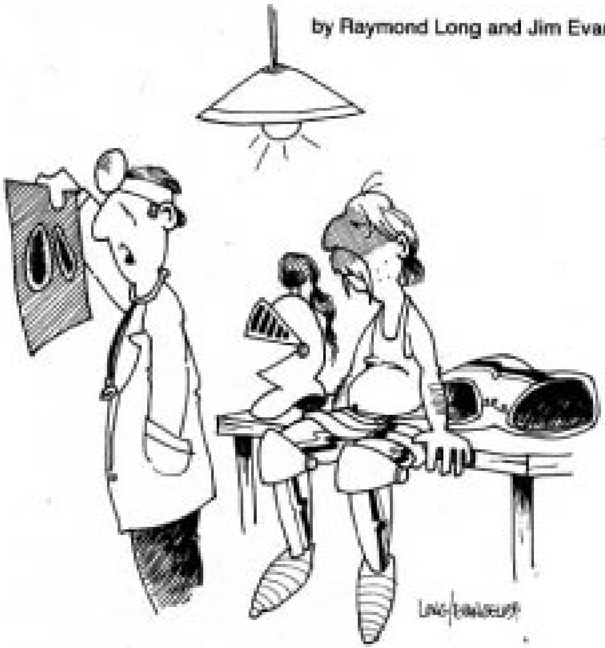
"...NOT ME. I THOUGHT YOU WERE MAPPING!..."

by Walt Hackensmith



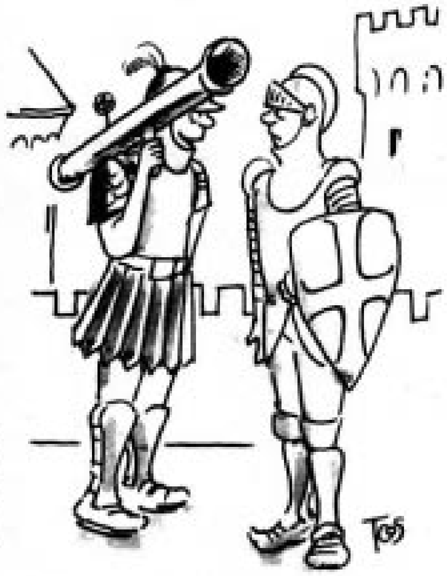
"Mom always did like you best!"

by Raymond Long and Jim Evangelisti



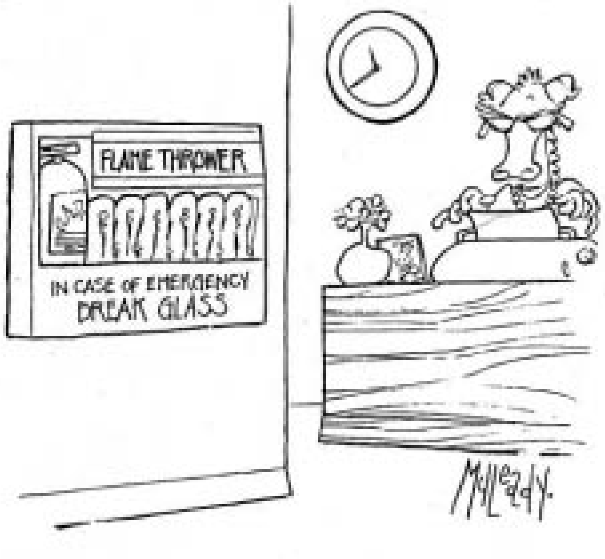
"Either lay off the fire breathers completely, or you've got two years at best."

by A.J. Toos

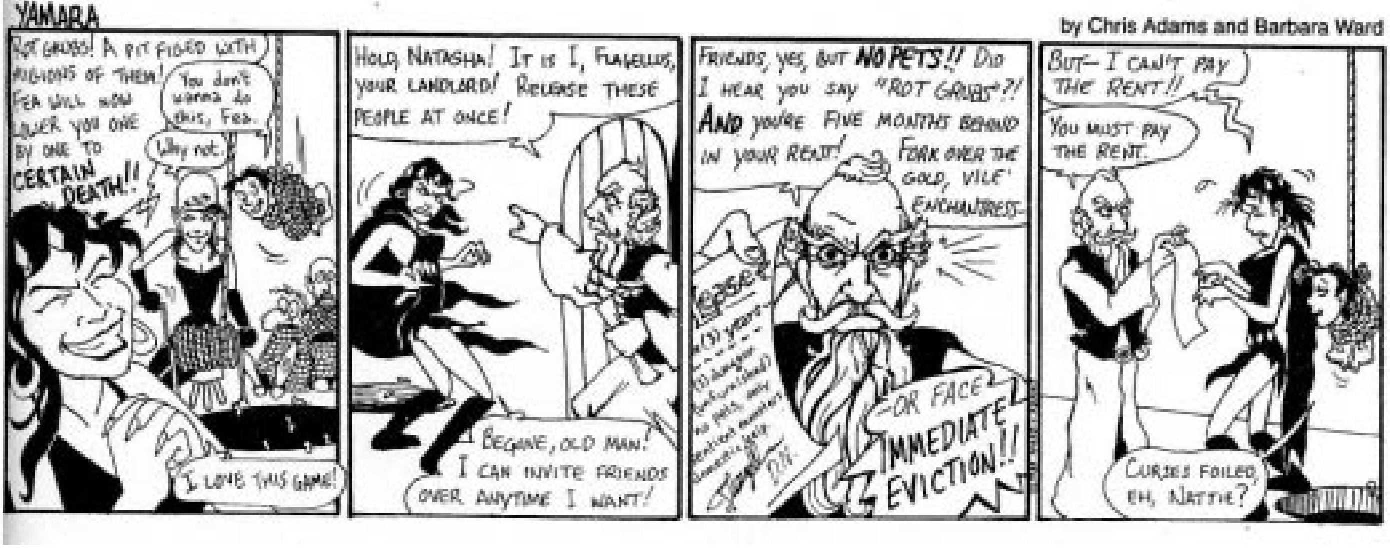


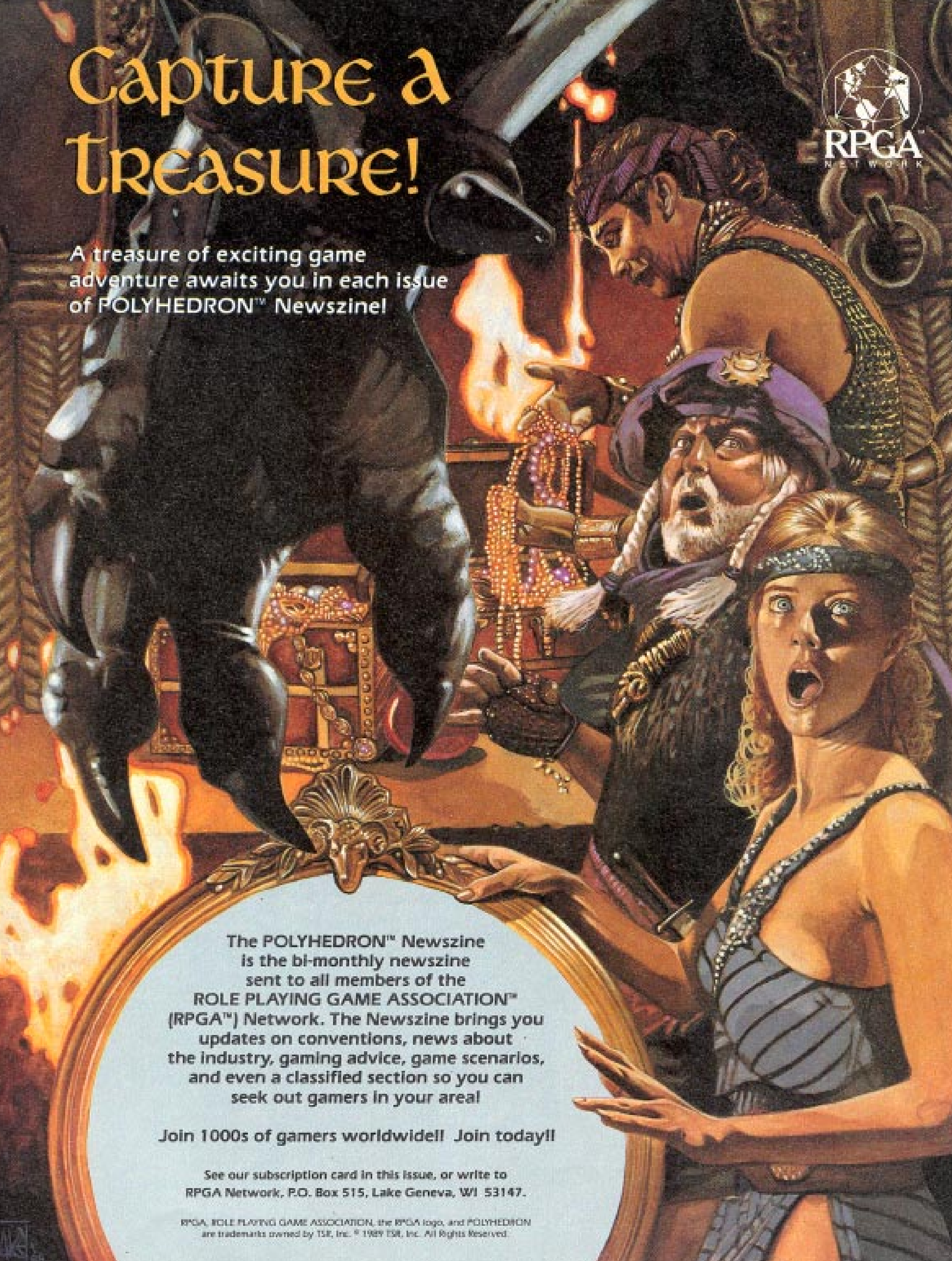
"It cost a few extra gold pieces, but it was worth it."

by Bob Mulleady


FLAME THROWER
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY BREAK GLASS

by Chris Adams and Barbara Ward


YAMARA
ROT GRUBS! A PIT FILLED WITH MILLIONS OF THEM! FEA WILL NOW LOWER YOU ONE BY ONE TO CERTAIN DEATH!!
You don't wanna do this, Fea.
Why not.
I LOVE THIS GAME!
HOLD, NATASHA! IT IS I, FLAGELLUS, YOUR LANDLORD! RELEASE THESE PEOPLE AT ONCE!
BEGONE, OLD MAN! I CAN INVITE FRIENDS OVER ANYTIME I WANT!
FRIENDS, YES, BUT NO PETS!! DID I HEAR YOU SAY "ROT GRUBS"?! AND YOU'RE FIVE MONTHS BEHIND IN YOUR RENT! FORK OVER THE GOLD, VILE ENCHANTRESS—
—OR FACE IMMEDIATE EVICTION!!
BUT— I CAN'T PAY THE RENT!!
YOU MUST PAY THE RENT.
CURSES FOILED, EH, NATTIE?



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Sage Advice

Continued from page 12

Does the *sword of flame* ability of a *helm of brilliance* bestow any magical properties to a sword that the helm's user carries?

A nonmagical sword becomes the equivalent of a flame tongue sword. Magical swords gain the powers of a *flame tongue* sword in addition to their own. If the sword was a *flame tongue* weapon to begin with, double the effects of its powers when used with the helm (see the *DMG,* pages 145-146 for the helm and page 165 for the sword).

Can magical helms and hats be worn simultaneously?

No. They won't fit together.

Is the change produced by a *hat of disguise* partially real or completely illusory? Will tactile examination reveal the change? Can the hat produce functional equipment?

The hat's effect is similar to that of an *alter self* spell, subject to the limits given in the item's description in *Unearthed Arcana,* page 100). Just touching the disguised individual will not reveal his true nature, but *true seeing* or detect illusion will do so. Like *alter* self, the change is partially real; the height and weight of the user actually changes, but any equipment created in the process is nonfunctional. The *hat* cannot produce functional body parts such as wings or gills.

May a *cloak of protection* be worn with nonmagical elfin chain mail?

No, nor may it be worn with any kind of armor other than nonmagical leather (see the *DMG,* page 141).

Can a *cloak of protection* be worn along with a *cloak of displacement* or *robe of blending?*

Only one magical cloak can be worn at a time, although a magical cloak and a robe can be worn together, with the cloak being worn over the robe.

Can a *cloak of arachnidia* or *cloak of the bat* be worn with plate mail?

Yes, or with any other type of armor. The protective qualities of these cloaks are not cumulative with any type of armor, however.

Can a *mantle of Celestian* (from *Unearthed Arcana,* page 101) be worn over a *cloak of protection?*

No, but it could be worn over a robe.

How many different characters can draw cards from one *deck of many things?*

Up to four cards may be drawn from the deck; a party may divide these draws among PCs in any way seen fit, except that card draws and results may not be shared. Any potential drawer must state how many cards he plans to draw before the first card is drawn, and he must stick to the decision once drawing begins (see the *DMG,* pages 142-143).

Does the pale green prism *ioun stone* bestow a level to its user permanently? Does it immediately "burn out" when so used?

No, to both questions. The stone must trail and circle the user to be effective. It does not "burn out" upon use, and the level is lost when the stone is not operating. Any spells gained from the increase in level are forgotten if the stone is removed; such spells must be restudied before being cast, even if the stone's effects are restarted later (see the *DMG,* page 147).

Will the white spindle *ioun stone,* which provides *regeneration,* continue to work if the user dies? Can the user regrow limbs?

The user can *regenerate* from injuries causing his death, but only if the stone is allowed to trail and circle the user's body. While the stone is functioning, the user can also regrow lost limbs or organs (see the *DMG,* page 147).

Are there any limits to the numbers, types, and magical bonuses of the items produced by a *quiver of Ehlonna?*

The *quiver of Ehlonna* is a holding device, like a *bag of holding.* One can only take out of it what has been put into it; it does not generate new items, as is accidentally implied in the last sentence of that item's description (see *Unearthed Arcana,* page 102).

Will a *stone of good luck* affect a character's *system shock* or *resurrection* rolls?

Yes, in both cases. The stone causes fate to be a bit kinder than normal to the character, and it makes adverse events less likely — failing a *system shock* or *resurrection* roll is an adverse event. However, the effect works only for the owner and only if the stone is on his person at the time the revivification attempt is made. It cannot be "given" to an already dead character (see the *DMG,* page 154).

The description of the *prison of Zagyg* in *Unearthed Arcana* (page 102) states that the possessor can free a prisoner by use of a "freedom word." What is a freedom word?

In this case, the freedom word is a command word that causes the prison to-release a captive. Command words are discussed briefly on page 119 of the *DMG.*

Does a *gem of insight* allow another check for psionic ability? How about a *ring of human influence* or *rod of splendor?*

A *gem of insight (see Unearthed Arcana,* page 100) will allow a new check for psionic ability, but only after the possessor has received an ability score increase from the gem. If the character uses the gem properly and receives an increase in both intelligence and wisdom, he makes one additional roll for psionics, not two.

The charisma increases provided by the latter two items are not permanent; they last only as long as the item is worn (in the case of the ring, on page 130 of the *DMG)* or held or carried (in the case of the rod, on page *94* of *Unearthed Arcana).* Only permanent ability score increases allow additional checks for psionic ability.

Can two alchemical substances be found simultaneously within a *philosopher's stone?*

Each stone contains quicksilver, plus either the green or the white crystalline salt. No stone contains all three, and the two salts never occur together (see *Unearthed Arcana,* page 101).

What happens when a *bag of holding* is turned inside out? Will the nondimension&l space inside rip?

This will completely empty the bag, but no spectacular effects will occur. The nondimensional space inside the bag is present but inaccessible as long as the bag remains inside out, rendering the bag inoperative except as a normal (nonmagical) bag. While inside out, the bag looks just like any other well-made but inside-out bag (see the *DMG,* page 138).

Will an *amulet of proof against detection and location* prevent an *invisible* character from being detected by someone with a *detect invisibility* spell?

Yes. The amulet defeats low-level divinations, including all *detect* spells. High-level divinations such as *commune* still work, however. The *invisible* character in the example can be revealed by dust *of appearance* (which is not a divination) and by the methods described on pages 59-60 of the *DMG.* Note that normal *invisibility* is broken when the recipient attacks.

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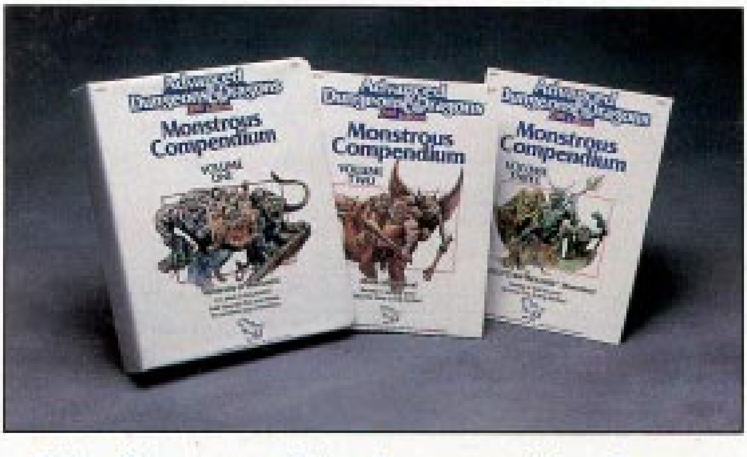
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